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Appletons' Home Books.

HOME DECORATION:

ART NEEDLE-WORK AND EMBROIDERY; PAINTING ON SILK, SATIN,
AND VELVET; PANEL-PAINTING; AND WOOD-CARVING.

BY

JANET E. RUUTZ-REES.

AUTHOR OF "HORACE VERNET," ETC.


WITH NUMEROUS DESIGNS, MAINLY BY GEORGE GIBSON.

NEW YORK:
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HOME DECORATION.

I.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE spirit of beauty is abroad, and the desire to increase the attractions of every-day homes grows greater from year to year. People have awakened to a perception that taste in ornament and skill in decoration are not so much gifts as faculties which can be cultivated, and which, once awakened, rarely sleep again.

The impetus given to decorative art within the last fifty years has outlived many extravagances and absurdities, and the time has come when the highest principles of ornament are applied to every-day use. Houses are very often intractable things to deal with, badly built or ill-arranged, with little of architectural merit, either in design or execution, and yet the love of beauty, the striving to make the best of what is unavoidable, will convert a desert-like structure of mere brick and mortar into a bower of elegance and prettiness, and this, too, without any great outreaching or expense.

The beauty of home decoration lies not so much in the richness and variety of the materials pressed into the

service as upon two things which are too often disregarded—simplicity and harmony—to which we may add that desire to express an idea or that imagination which at once converts the lowest effort into the highest by making it individual.

Much can be done for home decoration by the use of simple means, and in this manual we shall restrict ourselves to work which can be undertaken *in* the home *for* the home, leaving on one side that which requires elaborate study or special preparation, as, for example, china painting, enamel, and faience work—in short, all ceramics—and devote our attention to the great variety of ornamental work that can be achieved, by the needle in embroideries, by the brush in paintings on silk, velvet, or wood, by the saw in delicate wood-work, or by the ornamental use of leather. Even with such restrictions the field is a wide one, so various are the materials that can be used, the stitches that can be learned, the designs that can be elaborated.

First of all, we may lay it down as a principle that the useful should underlie the ornamental. A beautiful thing, which has grown out of a definite need, is more beautiful than that which has only its beauty to recommend it; so, in home decoration, that which first strikes the mind is the appropriateness or fitness of an ornament to the needs of the home, and we at once perceive that what we may call the main features are more important than the hundred and one knickknacks and fancy adornments, without which, however, the beauty of the home would be incomplete, and which can be multiplied indefinitely.

II.

GENERAL REMARKS.

Embroidery. Designing.—The easiest and most popular form of home decoration is that which can be accomplished by the needle. And as long as the question to be considered is one of material and color only, a sense of harmony and taste for simplicity will be infallible guides, but in the matter of design some knowledge of art-principles is necessary; at the least it is desirable to understand the meaning of terms constantly met with in suggestions for decorative needle-work.

We will suppose a case in which the needle is to be the prime agent in adorning the home. The question of embroidery is taken up enthusiastically, and the novice in such matters hears a great deal about *art needle-work*, *conventional* and *natural* designs, and becomes fairly puzzled as to the real meaning of the directions that are given. What is meant by *art needle-work*? and what is the difference between a conventional design and any other? Decorative needle-work is, in fact, only a revival of the ancient art of embroidery, and is founded upon the study of ancient models; and the word *conventional*, in connection with designs for execution by the needle, signifies the method of altering natural forms in such a way as to render them suitable to the material upon

which they are to be worked, and to the purposes for which they are intended.

Some little knowledge of the principles of elementary drawing and a sufficient idea of geometrical proportion are alone needed to enable the simplest beginner to design conventionally, for the use of the needle necessarily limits the subjects that can be treated. It has been proved by experience that flowers, foliage, or fruit can not be represented in embroidering exactly as they are in nature. As in sculpture the artist does not attempt to reproduce as minutely as the painter, so in needle-work the designer must be content to attempt such reproduction as is possible for the process and material which are to be employed. It is just this recognition of limitation which is meant by the term conventional. In early days, for example, in architecture, the first expression was mere outline-form, giving the geometrical proportions of the subject represented; then, as the art progressed, such adaptations were so varied and intermingled that only a careful student can trace the graceful curves and twists back to the first rigid geometrical outline. So, in conventional needle-work designs, some object from nature is selected, usually a flower or leaf, and its geometrical outline considered apart from everything else. Taken as the basis of the pattern, this outline, arranged in different forms, produces a design in which it requires some knowledge of the principle to trace the original.

The conventionalizing of a flower or leaf, then, simply means *the use of its form in an arbitrary fashion*, and, as such an arrangement, to have any value as a work of art, must be original, it is impossible to give more than general rules for conventional adaptation. The first point the student of design would be called upon to de-

cide would be the leading lines or stems which are to form the basis of the contemplated pattern. These once selected from the geometrical outline of a leaf, for example, could be variously treated ; they might be branched

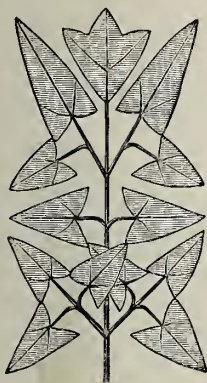


FIG. 1.

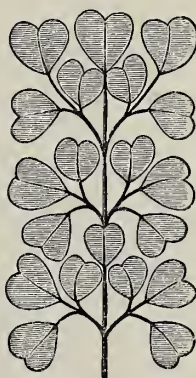


FIG. 2.

out in a form of angular severity as shown in Fig. 1, or in a more flowing style as represented in Fig. 2, their geometrical symmetry being carefully preserved.

It will be at once clear that such adaptations would admit of infinite variety according to the character and arrangement of the foliage with which the design is supplemented, the *branching alone* being in absolute accordance with the order of nature, and flowing always in one direction, while the design which radiates from it, or clothes it, may be varied in accordance with individual taste and judgment. Thus, in the example of the natural violets, as shown in Fig. 3, we have in Fig. 4 a conventional adaptation of the same flower for treatment by the needle, in which the geometrical proportions of the leaves are taken to form the branching lines or

stems, while the design with which these are clothed, or supplemented, is only remotely derived from the natural leaf, and is entirely original in conception and treatment.

The geometrical rules applied to such objects as may be chosen necessarily include proportion, symmetry, and the proper relation of one part of the figure to another; but, these principles once thoroughly learned, a little



FIG. 3.—Violets—Natural Forms.

practice will enable the student of art needle-work not only to design, but to recognize what are really true designs, correctly conventionalized, and what are simply natural objects, naturally copied. Roughly speaking,

there are two methods of treating natural forms by the needle. The most suitable, for less proficient workers, may be termed the natural treatment, where conventionalism is limited to the degree that is absolutely necessary

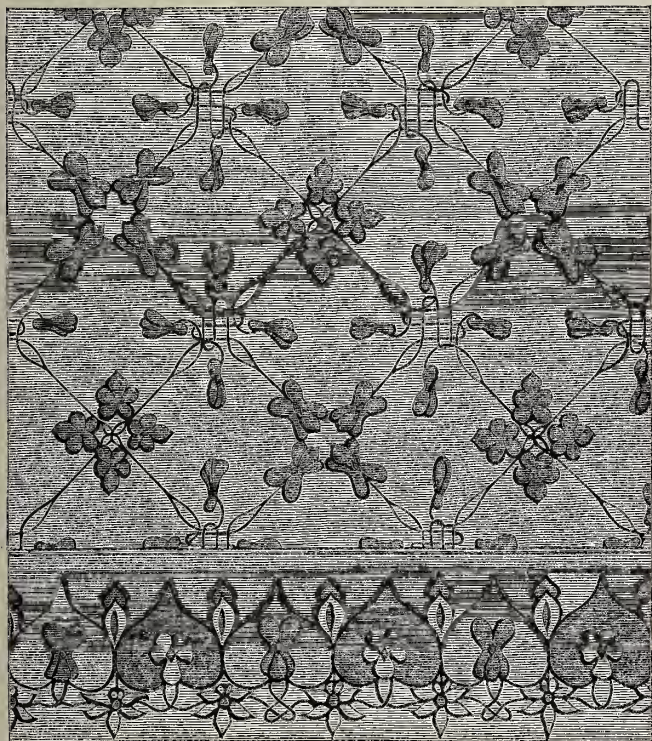


FIG. 4.—Conventional Forms derived from the Violet.

on account of the material used and the shape and size of the article to be worked, and the more severely conventionalized treatment in which natural forms are made the basis of a less formal design which is carried out in

various directions. By this latter method very beautiful patterns can be made, but it necessarily requires both knowledge and experience.

The object of this little book is not, however, to teach the art of designing, and we must be content to give such directions as to suitable designs and coloring, appropriate materials and styles, etc., as may serve as guides in the difficult matter of selection. Taking it, then, as established that flowers and foliage are the most desirable objects for reproduction by embroidery, we may go on to say that the simplest flowers are the best, because they can be most fully expressed in a few lines in outline, and require the fewest shades of color. Double flowers are alike unsuitable and difficult. Wild roses, daisies, lilies, pansies, sunflowers, and daffodils are all easily outlined, having strong forms and decided proportions, and are admirably adapted for the purpose.

Attention to detail is essential : before commencing a pattern, the worker should note the shape and size of the leaves, the notches of the edges, the chief characteristics of the design, and, above all, the junction of leaves and flowers with the stalks. The truth and life of the representation depend largely upon such trifling details, and especially in outline work they are most important.

Many beautiful combinations are made with berries and their leaves, and a very little practice in simple flower-forms will soon suggest a variety ; in "*filled-in*" embroidery—that is, in work in which the flowers and leaves are not only outlined, but fully worked—the vacant spaces should be left larger, as the material becomes a little contracted in the working. Designs for outline work may be more closely drawn, but, whether intended for the one or the other, they must be very exactly and

carefully reproduced, for everything depends upon the grace and truth of the form.

For border designs, if they are intended for an horizontal position, upright sprigs or flowers are the best, and such patterns require a line below and above to keep them together; otherwise they will look disjointed, and each sprig will appear too independent of the rest. The flowers need not spring directly from the line, but the effect will be as controlling as if they really touched it. If the pattern is large, several lines are an improvement, as they give more weight to the lower part. Scroll borders also require a line on each side. Sometimes an equally good result is obtained by the scroll being worked on separate strips of material and laid on, by which means the same idea of inclosure is conveyed. Inaccuracies should be carefully avoided; although nature can not be *exactly* copied in needle-work, still it need never be outraged. For example: a strawberry-leaf in combination with a carnation-bud is absurd—a convolvulus with a thorny brier; or, as in a pattern submitted to us the other day, a pineapple surrounded by primroses and violets, or any other effect which is alien to reality should be avoided. It is often necessary to enlarge flowers, but in this there is no sin against truth, for they may be enlarged in proper proportions, and all those in a group should be made of corresponding size. As we have shown, to conventionalize does not mean to depart from nature, but to adapt from nature, and good conventional work is always true in principle. Although flowers, foliage, and berries are undoubtedly the easiest subjects for embroidery, many natural objects can be associated with them; birds and butterflies are very appropriate, especially the latter, as they can be made to harmonize with almost any flowers;

but the mixture of birds and flowers of different climates should be avoided.

Next in importance to the design comes the question of color.

Colors in Embroidery.—As a conventionalized form is a necessity in copying from nature, so, too, is a conventionalized coloring, because it is impossible in many cases to give the natural coloring of a flower or leaf; even when we are able to reach the general tone, the subtile gradations are beyond us. Then, too, we have to consider the surroundings; our worked flowers must be adapted to the indoor atmosphere, for they will not have the clear air, the sunlight, and their natural texture to make them delightful. Pure color transferred to needle-work would be glaring and offensive—in addition to which we must remember that nature has no raw color, and her beauties are entirely dependent upon subtile mixtures which it is quite impossible to attain in the finest shades of silk or wool. Therefore, it is best to be content with suggestions only from nature, and avoiding too close a copy to chose our colors with regard to their general harmony. Harmony and simplicity being the first principles of decorative design, the treatment of the subject being conventional, the coloring should be so too.

The ground-color must regulate the general tone, and this must often depend upon the purpose for which the work is intended; for example: in curtains everything should bear relation to the dominant tone of the room. The prevailing color having once been determined, the details should be rather in *harmony* than in *contrast* with it.

Variations in different tones of one color will be more satisfactory, as a rule, than striking contrasts, and for this

reason the graduated shades which are to be obtained in well-assorted crewels and silks will be found a great assistance in carrying out an harmonious design. Laying it down as indispensable that the prevailing ground-tone should regulate the colors of the entire work, it may be added that it is always best to avoid strong patches of vivid coloring. Crimson, bright reds, yellows, blues, and vivid greens should be used sparingly, and only in such combinations as shall insure pleasant and not painful contrast.

But coloring is altogether so much a matter of individual taste and judgment that it is scarcely possible to lay down any fixed rule that shall meet all contingencies; at the same time a few suggestions for pleasant contrasts, gathered from the work of a scientific authority upon combinations of color, may be of great value to the uninitiated.* The contrasts which we find in nature very often cease to be happy when conveyed to canvas in painting, and still oftener so when attempted in colored materials, such as silks or wools. Green and blue, for example, which are charming when represented by the sky peeping through bright foliage, are by no means so delightful in decorative work, for the reason that the subtile gradations of shades, which we do not take into account, but which, nevertheless, exist in nature, are impossibilities in needle-work; in fact, we can not realize in a landscape what the color-combinations really are, so deceptive are the lights and shadows that surround and soften them. In contrasting wools or silks, then, vermilion and any deep reds give a good combination in contrast with blue. Yellows are best contrasted with violet or pur-

* "Modern Chromatics," By Ogden N. Rood.

ple. Orange in combination with dark blue is not unpleasant, and it is also pleasant in association with green. Vivid green with violet is good upon a strictly neutral background, but it is better to employ the paler hues of these colors. Green and red afford a good contrast, while with either of them in combination with blue or yellow very unsatisfactory results are obtained. If a further combination is desired, the triads which have been most extensively used together are: bright red, yellow, and blue; purple-red, yellow, and dark blue; orange, green, and violet, and orange, green, and purple. Many other combinations could, of course, be suggested, but such as have been mentioned may serve as guides to others. White or gray, in combination with any of these colors, could be introduced with the happiest results. But success in the matter of color must be, in a great measure, the result of education, taste, and practice. It is so extremely difficult to judge of the effect produced by any combination, when the result attained is dependent upon such unreliable things as colored silks and wools, that wise judgment in decorative needle-work is of the greatest value and importance. In doubtful cases it is best to seek advice from those whose practical acquaintance with the difficulties of embroidery has taught them more than can be acquired from any treatise on the subject. In this, as in almost all else, a grain of experience is worth more than a bushel of the wisest directions.

Painting on Wood for Panels.—Old and well-seasoned wood is the best for panel-painting. The natural color of the wood is most effective as a background. Taste and judgment are required to make such painting satisfactory; and it should not be forgotten that panels being at best merely decorative, to be appropriate must

be subordinate to the purposes of the room. Glaring, highly-colored panels are most offensive.

The implements necessary in panel-painting are, ordinary red sable brushes, a coarser quality for painting the backgrounds, and the usual oil-colors in tubes. To all novices in the art the same caution can not be too often repeated. Relinquish ambitious attempts at effect; remember that your painting is to play a subordinate part in the decoration of the room, wherever it may be placed, whether upon the door itself, upon a side-panel, or as an ornament upon the mantel, or wall. Harmony, and not striking brilliancy of color, should be your object, and such subjects as will blend well with ordinary decoration should be chosen for treatment.

For backgrounds, softly-toned blues, grays, or greens are best, with fleecy-white, touched into warmth by deeper colors.

Painting on Wood in Water-colors.—The most suitable wood for such a purpose for amateurs is the white chestnut in the natural color, and the design should be first outlined in pencil. This done, the surface should be thoroughly cleaned, and the colors mixed with Chinese white, which renders them opaque. The darker shades should be painted on first, and from them the ascent made to the highest lights. A very fine luster can be given to the panel if a coat of patent white glaze is applied to the entire surface, the operation to be repeated as soon as the first coating is dry, and completed by the application of white spirit varnish with a soft, yielding brush. When this, in its turn, is thoroughly dry, another coating should be worked from side to side, until the requisite polish is attained.

Veneered tables can be elegantly decorated either in

water- or oil-colors, the surface being ebonized as soon as the colors are dry.

Painting on Silk, Satin, and Velvet.—When oil-paint is to be used, it is a wise plan to begin by squeezing the tube colors on blotting-paper, that it may absorb the oil, as there is always a risk of staining the material. The highest general color to be used should be chosen first, then one rapid sweep of the brush should give as much effect as can be conveyed; the brush should be carried right across the material with, and not against, the grain. The deepest shadows should be the last put on. Blending colors upon silk or satin is so difficult that it is best done upon the palette. By using a very stiff brush it is possible to produce beautiful results upon plush, but the color must sink well in, and it is rather a difficult operation. Feathers are often very beautifully painted, especially on fans.

Sateen is one of the best materials for painting in water-colors, as it is soft and takes the color so readily that elaborate designs are possible in its decoration.

Linens, too, take color well, and pretty designs in panels are excellent for bedroom and nursery screens. In painting on silk, satin, or velvet, the best materials should always be selected. The surface to be decorated should be stretched tightly upon a flat board, and the design outlined in pencil; or, better still, transferred by means of red or blue paper. The greatest difficulty in water-color painting is the risk of the color spreading, but this is in a measure obviated by mixing Chinese white with the colors. In figure-painting it is well to begin with the heads; in landscape, with the sky.

Painting on canvas, to imitate tapestry, is coming into fashion. Landscapes and bold designs are the best

for this purpose, such work being executed upon pliable ribbed canvas, which has undergone especial preparation, and the colors are regularly rubbed into the background. It is difficult to produce delicate effects, as it is almost impossible to give minute touches. The colors used in this work are in reality liquid dyes.

III.

MATERIALS AND PRICES.

GREAT liberty of choice is possible in regard to the materials used as foundation for embroideries, some kinds being more especially appropriate to one purpose, some to another, and much must depend not only upon the destination of the work, but upon the choice of silks or worsteds in the working.

While it is a mistake to select inferior stuffs for decoration, it is an equal error to use inferior silks or crewels upon handsome materials. Fine linen calls for fine crewels or silks. Satin and velvet look incongruous if worked in coarse worsted or crewels; for these the finest silks and filoselles should be selected. It is bad economy to buy inferior qualities of such materials; the best, and only the best, are suitable for all the time and trouble bestowed upon an elaborate design. Good, firm, well-woven textures, free from all irregularity, are the only suitable materials for decorative needle-work. They need not necessarily be expensive; it is only needful that they should be the best of their kind, and that they should be treated suitably, and used for purposes not out of keeping with their qualities.

Satins and silks can only be properly embroidered in a frame. Furniture satin with a cotton back may be used without lining, but ordinary dress-satin requires a thin

cotton backing or it will pucker under the strain of working. White satin embroidered in colored silks is very beautiful.

As it is always worth while for good embroidery to be upon durable material, linens are better than cottons, and mixed stuffs are not desirable. Thick diagonal cloth or serge of the best quality is very suitable either for silk or for crewel work, and is, in addition, easily worked, which becomes a great consideration when the undertaking is a large one, as, for example, a pair of curtains. No highly-finished or glazed surface should be selected for decoration by the needle, as the stitches do not sink well into the material, and the glaze is very apt to fray out. Satin forms the only exception to this rule.

There are many varieties of unglazed, half-bleached linens which are extremely suitable for decorative needle-work, of which we may mention :

Flax cloth, the unbleached brown linen often used for chair-covers.

Twill, a thick linen, suitable for furniture coverings.

Sail-cloth, of yellow color, admirable for screen-panels.

Oat-cake and *oatmeal linens*, which are materials that wash well.

Smock linen, which is fashionable for tennis aprons.

Crash is very much used. It is, in reality, a home-spun, Russian linen, although other materials are constantly sold under this name. The true crash is only eighteen inches in width, is very coarse, and is spun by Russian peasants, in lengths varying from five to ten yards. Many good imitations are to be met with.

Bolton, or *workhouse sheeting*, is a beautiful material, very much used in embroidery ; it is seventy-two inches

wide, and is of soft, creamy color; it is much improved by washing.

Silk sheeting, satin de Chine, tussore, and corah silks, and fabrics known as plain tapestry, are all especially suitable for the varieties of what is known as cushion-stitch.

Felt, which is difficult to work, *velveteen*, and *velvet cloth*, make excellent grounds for panels, *portières*, borders, etc.

Diagonal cloth, serge, super-serge, and Canton flannel, the latter known in the stores as "fashion drapery," as well as *Genoa or Lyons velvet*, all form good foundations for needle-work, while the latest, most fashionable, and most expensive material is *plush*, which can be obtained in every variety of color.

Gold and silver cloths are, of course, not in ordinary use, but can be obtained at high prices. A variety of fabrics, in which silk predominates, but gold and silver threads are interwoven, are obtainable, but are more used for ecclesiastical or heraldic purposes than for home decoration.

For crewel work, linen should be just coarse enough to allow the worsted to pass through easily.

Crewels for working should be cut into short threads, never more than half the skein in length. Long needle-fuls pull the material out of shape, and are, besides, very wasteful. Occasionally it is necessary to use crewel double, in which case it should never be passed through the needle and knotted at the two ends, but two separate threads of the right length should be passed through the needle together.

Crewels of the best quality only should be used. In these the colors are fast, and will bear cleaning or washing.

Crewels are more especially suitable for working upon all kinds of linen, on plain, diagonal cloth, serge, and flannel. They are very effective in combination with filoselle or embroidery silk, whether for working conventional designs or where flowers are introduced into the design. Leaves worked in crewel and the flowers in silk makes a very effective combination.

Tapestry wool is double the thickness of crewel, and is only useful for coarse work.

Arrasene is a sort of chenille, and is useful in producing broad effects, being soft and rich in appearance.

Embroidery or bobbin silk is used for working upon satin and silk, or upon any fine material; it is not unlike old-fashioned floss silk, and, like it, is used in several threads at once.

Purse silk is less soft, but is very useful in diapering, or where raised effects are desirable.

Filoselle, when of good quality, is pure silk, but, being manufactured of inferior silks, is cheaper than floss or purse silk.

Gold and silver threads are little used, but can be obtained, if desired, for raised gold or silver embroideries.

Bullion is fashionable, but very difficult to use with skill; it should be threaded on the needle, and fastened down as in bead-work. It is occasionally used for the backs and seats of chairs, upon deep-toned velvet, but it is so easily tarnished as to be practically of little use.

The price of material does not vary greatly from time to time. The subjoined prices are those asked, at the time this is written, in the stores in New York:

Cotton momie-cloth, fifty inches wide, in all the fashionable shades, one dollar and ten cents a yard.

Woolen momie-cloth, three dollars a yard.

Felting which is two yards in width costs one dollar and a half a yard.

Satin known as *furniture satin* is of great width, and costs from six dollars and a half a yard upward.

Sateen, fifty inches wide, is three dollars and a half a yard.

Turkish satin, the same width, six dollars a yard.

Satin brocatelle, sixty-three inches wide, costs ten dollars a yard and upward.

Plush is the most expensive material used in decorative embroidery; the cheapest single-width is four dollars and a half a yard. *Woolen plush* is half a dollar cheaper.

Bolton sheeting is imported from England, and may be had for one dollar a yard.

Turcoman cloth costs six dollars a yard—wide width.

Stamped velveteen is to be had from one dollar and twenty-five cents a yard upward.

Plain velveteen is to be had from one dollar a yard upward.

Canton flannel, which is very much used, and should be asked for as “fashion drapery,” can be bought in every variety of shade for ninety cents a yard. It is double width, and alike upon both sides.

Linens can, of course, be purchased at varying prices, dependent upon quality.

IV.

STITCHES AND METHODS.

A good authority has laid it down as a principle that "the simpler and fewer the stitches in embroidery the better." This is encouraging, and at the same time true, as the difference in stitches is in reality only the modification of a certain number, and their use in different combinations at different times.

- *Stem-stitch* (called by Miss Glaisher, in her work on "Art Embroidery," *Tent-stitch*) is the first and most simple stitch taught to a beginner. It consists in a single long stitch taken forward, and a shorter one backward, followed by another forward stitch a little in advance of the first; in outline work care must be taken to keep the thread well to the left of the needle, and to bring it through each time exactly in the line of the pattern; otherwise the result will be an uneven, wavy outline. The quickest way is to work upward from the worker. The stitches should all be equal, neither too loose nor too tight, and each point should be kept clear and bright. (See Fig. 5.) In working "filled-in embroidery" in stem-stitch the outline should be the last thing attempted, as by this method a more natural look is given to a leaf or flower. The stitches are intended to express the form of the leaf, and they should take the same direction as in shading with pen or pencil.

In the example given (Fig. 6) of a pansy, the stitches must take the direction of the outline, from the *center*,

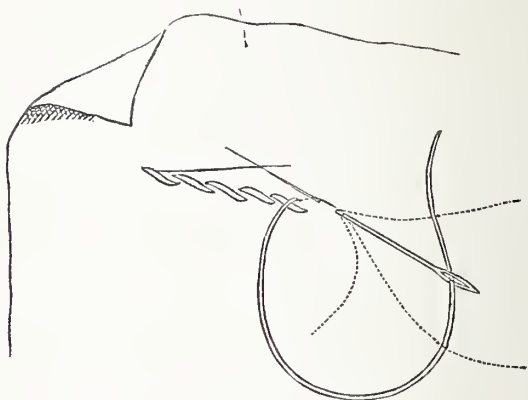


FIG. 5.—Stem-Stitch.

while in a simple leaf they should be at an angle from the middle rib, as in nature (Fig. 7). This treatment

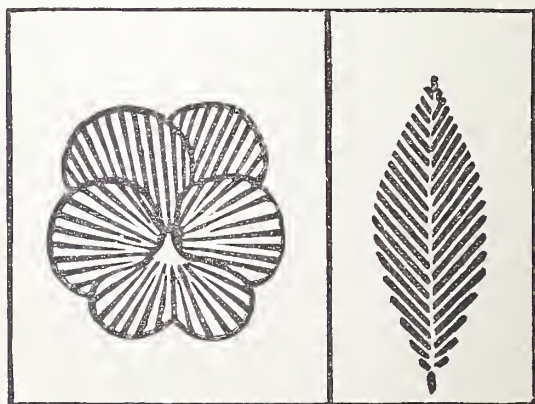


FIG. 6.

FIG. 7.

should be followed whenever possible, as it gives a life-like appearance to the representation.

No exact rule can be laid down for the length of this stitch; it must depend upon the size of the object represented, the material, the fineness or coarseness of the work, etc. (For ordinary crewel-work perhaps a stem-stitch might be from three eighths to half an inch long. In silk-work it should be shorter.)

Cross-stitch is no longer used in modern work; it has gone out of favor with the old-fashioned samplers that

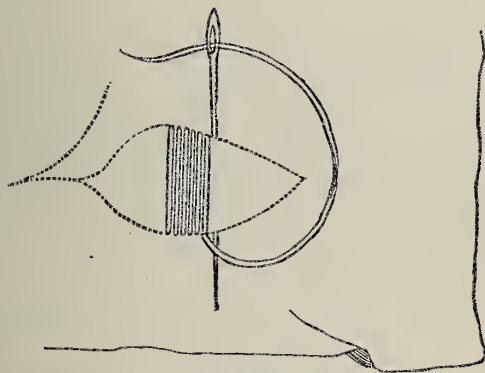


FIG. 8.—Satin-Stitch.

exhausted the patience and occupied the time of a former generation.

Split-stitch is worked in a similar way to stem-stitch, only in bringing the needle up through the material it is passed through the crewel or silk. This stitch is more suitable for frame- than for hand-work.

Satin-stitch (Fig. 8) is greatly used in white embroidery, and consists in taking the needle back each time to almost the spot whence it started, so that the same

result is reached upon both sides. It produces a perfectly smooth surface when properly and neatly worked, and is very useful for petals and raised designs in small masses.

Blanket-stitch (Fig. 9) is used for edging. It is exactly like ordinary button-hole stitch, and varies only by being sloped in any required direction, or by working two or three stitches and then leaving a space.

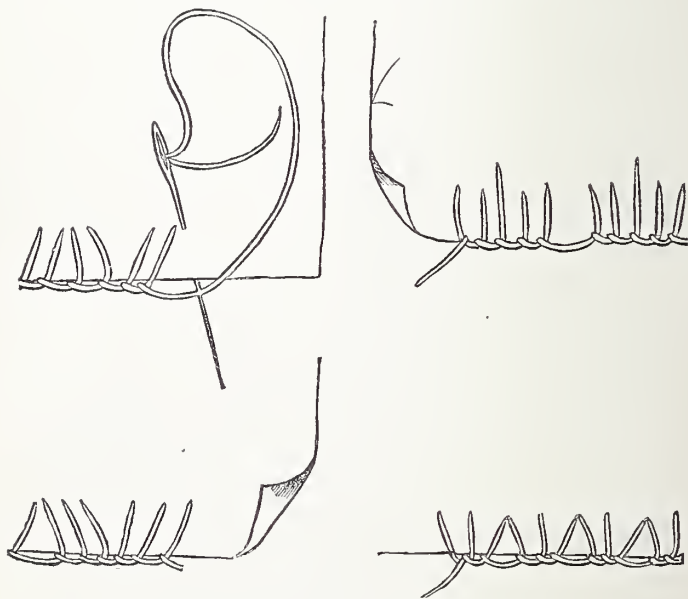


FIG. 9.—Blanket-Stitch.

Chain-stitch is used occasionally in filled-in embroidery, but it has a mechanical effect, and has been so exactly copied by machine-work that it is no longer suggestive in needle-work. It consists simply in taking a stitch from left to right, and, before drawing out the needle, bringing the thread round to the worker under the

point of the needle. Where the outline is required to be *very marked*, chain-stitch may be used to replace stem-stitch. (Fig. 10.)

Rope-stitch is a sort of twisted chain-stitch, and is very effective for coarse work. It is managed by taking the second stitch from the center of the loop, and passing it to half the distance behind it, and then pushing the loop on one side to allow the needle to enter in a straight line with the first stitch. (Fig. 11.)

Feather-stitch, sometimes called *long-stitch*, or simply

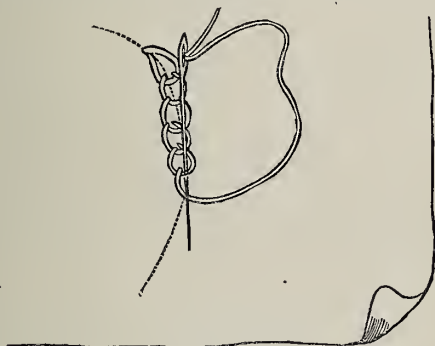


FIG. 10.--Chain-Stitch.

embroidery-stitch, has lately been rechristened as *opus plumarium*, from its resemblance to birds' plumage. It is a very easy, light stitch, either as worked in the hand or in a frame. The stitches in both instances are the same; the method consists in working the stitches of varying length into and between each other, adapting them to the design; in frame-work passing the needle backward and forward, while in the hand it is kept upon the surface. This is a very useful stitch for embroidering flowers, whether natural or conventional. (Fig.

12.) In working the petal of a flower the outer part is first worked with closer stitches, to form an even edge,

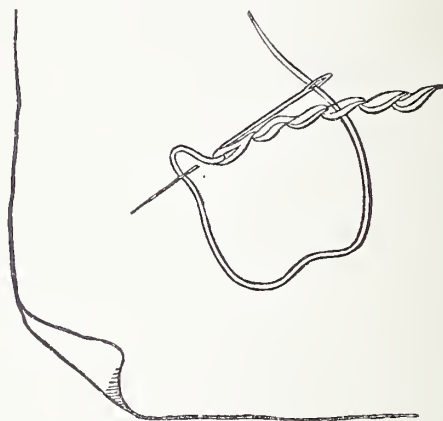


FIG. 11.—Twisted Chain.

while toward the center broken or uneven stitches are best; then follow more irregular stitches, which, start-



FIG. 12.—Feather-Stitch.

ing from the center, are carried in among those already worked. When completed, the stitches should have been so worked in and among each other as to blend in an harmonious whole, separate stitches being indistinguishable ; and, when shaded silks are used, the gradations ought to be scarcely perceptible. In leaves with uneven edges these stitches are admirable for following the broken outline, and giving the true appearance of a serrated leaf.

The proper way to start in all such work is by running the thread a little in front of the embroidery, never in any case by knotting the thread. Knots are wholly inadmissible, as are also untidy ends ; the back should be as neat as the surface.

All other stitches used in embroideries are merely modifications of those already named, and to enumerate them would only confuse a worker. But we will mention a useful device for the raised centers of flowers, as, for instance, the daisy or sunflower, or the stamens of others. It is called a *French knot* (Fig. 13), and is made by bringing the thread through to the front of the work and holding it in the left hand four or five inches from the work, the needle being in the right hand ; the thread in the left hand is twisted two or three times round the needle as close to the work as possible ; then the point is turned down into the material nearly, but not exactly, where the thread came up ; the needle is then pulled through to the other side, and the thread carefully drawn till the knot is firm. The knot will hang loose and have a bad effect unless the thread is drawn round the needle close up to the work before the needle is pulled quite through.

Holbein-stitch is a name given to stitches used in elaborating designs copied from the works of Hans Holbein,

and in reality it owes its name to the painter whose patterns are taken rather than to any peculiarity in the stitch itself. German needle-women bring this class of work to very great perfection, using it for the borderings of

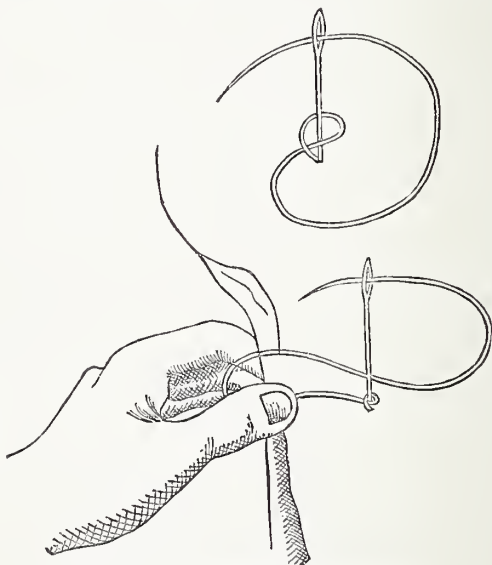


FIG. 13.—Knotted-Stitch, or French Knot.

towels, and sometimes of table-cloths, which are finished off with elaborate fringes of the material raveled out, the strands being then plaited and knotted in various patterns. It is worked in colored silks if upon linens, while, if upon canvas, embroidery cotton is used, generally red or blue.

Stitches for Frame Embroidery. Couching or Laid Embroidery.—In this work the threads are first laid evenly and straight from side to side of the space to be covered, the needle being passed through to the back

and brought up again, not quite close, but at a sufficient distance to allow of an intermediate stitch being taken backward, so that the threads are laid, alternately, first, third, second, fourth, and so on, which has a better effect than if they were laid on consecutively. If the lines slant much it is not necessary to alternate the rows. When a layer is complete, threads of different color or material are laid across at regular intervals and fixed down by stitches at the back. (Fig. 14.) The chief beauty of such work lies in its regularity. This stitch is admirable when broad effects are needed without shading, and it is extremely useful in restoring old embroidery by grounding it anew instead of transferring it. This is best effected by stretching the old embroidery

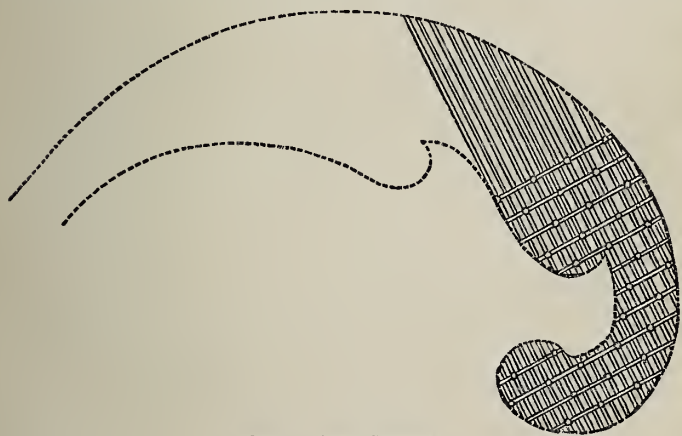


FIG. 14.—Plain Couching.

upon a new backing, carefully cutting away the frayed material and couching the new ground. Various diapered patterns can be made by this stitch by simply alternating the crossings. Sometimes the threads are laid

on in twos or threes, and stitched across at regular intervals (Fig. 15), giving an effect known as *brick-work*.

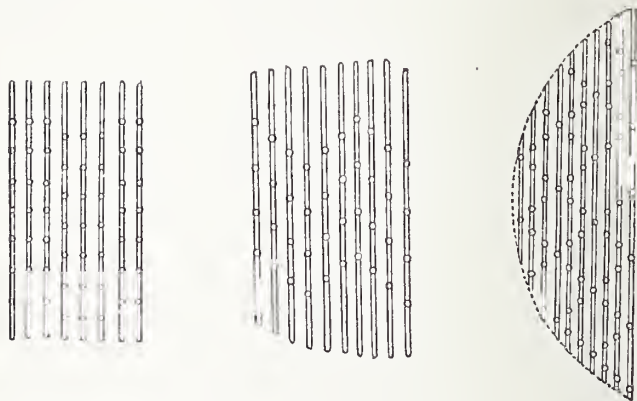


FIG. 15.—Three Illustrations of Diaper-Couchings—Couching known as “Erick-work.”

Cushion-stitch is simply *stem-stitch*, and by a second stitch is converted into *cross-stitch*, as in hand embroidery.

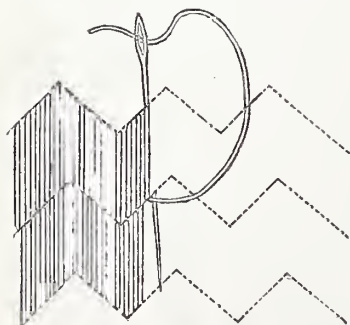


FIG. 16.—Cushion-Stitch.

Cushion-stitch is a name also applied to the many stitches used in groundings, either by taking up single threads at long, even intervals, or (as in Fig. 16) in waved lines or zig-zags.

Stem-stitch and *split-stitch* are also used in frame-work.

Japanese-stitch (Fig. 17) is worked in the same way as *stem-stitch*, but is a modification of it, and consists in various very long

stretches, which have the effect of parallel lines; it is useful in representing water or ground.

Among the stitches no longer in common use are *tam-*

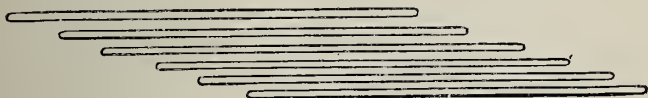


FIG 17.

bour-stitch, and what is known as *opus anglicum*, although the latter is still used in ecclesiastical needle-work.

Appliqué, or cut-work, must be divided into work *inlaid* and *onlaid*.

Inlaid appliqué consists in tracing the same pattern on two materials, then cutting both out carefully and inlaying the one into the other. This class of work is common in old Italian embroideries and in tapestries. The *inlaying* is managed by sewing the inlaid part down with thread, covered with cords or couchings of floss silk. Sometimes narrow ribbons or braid is stitched over the edges to keep them flat.

Onlaid appliqué consists in cutting out the pattern in several stuffs and laying it down upon an even ground of another material; care must be taken to cut the applied work even; the back of each piece may be touched with gum (very thick and dry, lest it should penetrate the material), in order to keep it in its place upon the material, which should first be worked out. Then the applied piece should be very carefully adjusted, the edges fastened down by laying a cord of silk, or silver, or gold twist on the edge, and sewing it down with fine stitches. Sometimes the edges are sewn down with button-hole stitch, in a lighter or darker shade. In a leaf-pattern

the vein may be indicated by silk of a darker shade. (Fig. 18.)

Transferring Designs.—This process varies according to the nature and color of the material to be used. If the ground is light, a good way is to trace the design carefully upon tissue-paper and fix the pattern flat upon the material; then, placing between them a sheet of car-

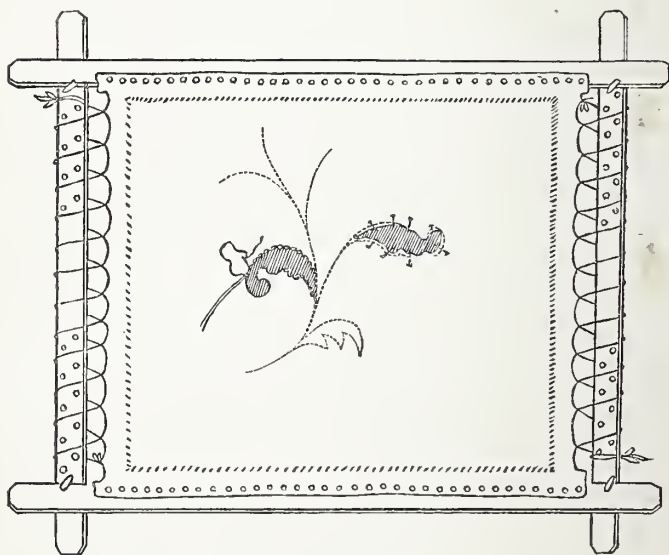


FIG. 18.

bonized paper, go over the pattern with a sharp metallic pencil, and the design will be accurately traced upon the ground. But, occasionally, by this method, the color of the carbonized paper remains behind and soils the material, especially if it is freshly carbonized; a piece that has seen service is therefore precious. To transfer on to dark grounds another method must be resorted to.

Pouncing.—By this process the design must be drawn upon thick paper, and the outlines pricked through with a pin. When once the pattern is pricked out, it is fixed face downward upon the material, and rubbed over with starch or fine powder, sewn up in a thin muslin bag, or, better still, with pulverized pipe-clay, rubbed on with a firmly-rolled piece of flannel or wad. Then carefully removing the pattern, a pen dipped in India-ink, or a brush in a solution made of pipe-clay and gum, will effectually trace out the pattern.

Although we mention these methods for the use of those who desire to transfer patterns, either for appliqué-work or embroidery of any kind, we at the same time recommend all who can do so to have the design traced for them either by the designer or by a professional stamper. The greatest care is necessary in the process, and it is terribly annoying to find a delicate material soiled or spoiled in the very commencement. Stamping patterns for embroidery is quite an art, and well worth the small sum demanded.

Drawn Work.—Before leaving the subject of embroidery we must speak of the revival of a very ancient art in the drawn work which is becoming daily more fashionable. Although it is terribly trying to the eyes, it is yet so fascinating that the most elaborate designs are now carried on by its means. This method of decoration consists in drawing out the threads of fine linen, and filling in patterns with every variety and combination of stitch. Hemstitch is the first and easiest form of it, but from this simple drawing out of one thread and stitching at regular intervals, the art has progressed to the arrangement of most elaborate patterns, fringes, and insertions. Few directions for such work can be given, the

most elaborate being, after all, merely a matter of industry and arrangement. So many more threads pulled out, so many, or so few, passed over or caught together, and varied by the introduction of herring-bone, button-hole, or chain-stitches, or by overcasting, or darning-stitch. This latter at once brings us to the darned net-work, which was the foundation of later lace, and has been revived again. In England, curtains of hand netting, elaborately darned in patterns, are much used, and coverings of the same work over colored silks or satins are very effective.

Italian and Spanish Drawn Work is beautiful, and some of the ancient specimens are as elaborate and fine as the finest lace.

Point Coupé includes different styles of hand-made lace. An English authority defines it as "stuff gummed to a net-work of threads, the pattern formed by outlining with button-hole stitch the parts that were to remain, and cutting the rest away"; and as "threads alone arranged in a frame and radiating from a common center, worked in various patterns."

Reference is constantly made to it in history. It was universally used in the middle ages for the decoration of dress, but is now chiefly devoted to the trimming of other work. Silk and satin linings, and the introduction of silk in the working, or silk laid over net, and treated as above, all furnish varieties of the same style.

Lace Work.—This subject is too wide a one for a small manual. We must be content to mention that from the coarsest Maeramé lace to the most delicate point and pillow lace, every possible variety can be accomplished by industrious and skillful fingers.

Frames and Framing.—The old-fashioned frame with bars, upon which webbing was firmly nailed, to re-

ceive the material to be worked, which was sewn tightly upon it, has been superseded by one recently patented, in which the webbing is rendered unnecessary, and the work is stretched by means of rollers. Mr. F. Sharpe, of No. 317 East Forty-first Street, New York, has recently effected still greater improvements in embroidery frames, and has succeeded in perfecting an arrangement by means of which the work is evenly stretched, and so firmly secured that the material does not give in the least degree, even under the strain of very heavy work.

The best Embroidery Needles for ordinary crewel hand-work are Nos. 5 and 6 ; for coarse materials, such as sail-cloth or oatcake cloth, No. 4 ; for frame embroidery or very fine hand-work, the higher numbers. It is a mistake to use too fine a needle ; the rule to be observed is, that the silk or crewel should pass easily through the eye, otherwise it is liable to become frayed in working.

Scissors should be finely pointed, and very sharp.

Thimbles which have been worn smooth are the best. Some workers prefer ivory or vulcanite. Two thimbles should be used for frame-work.

Prickers are necessary for piercing holes in gold embroidery, and also for arranging the lie of the thread in some forms of couching.

Linen of every description, except that known as oatcake or sail-cloth, can be worked without a frame.

Gold Embroidery on velvet or satin grounds requires to be worked on strong, even linen, and then cut out and applied in the same manner as ordinary *appliqué*. When a particularly rich and raised effect is desired, any embroidery may be treated in this manner ; it is more troublesome, but it amply repays the labor by the increased beauty of the work.

Old Embroideries are often transferred to new ground by this method, and in such work it is necessary to cut away the ground close to the embroidery ; then place it on the new material, which has been previously framed, and the outline tacked down. The best way of finishing is then to work in the edges with silks *died exactly to match* the colors in the old work. If this is properly done, it is impossible to discover which are old and which new stitches, and it is only by examining the back that it can be seen that the work has been transferred at all. Embroidery so transferred is as good as it was in its first days—in many cases much better, for time has often the same mellowing effects upon embroideries as upon paintings.

A less expensive, but also much less charming method, is to edge the old embroidery, after applying it to the new ground, with a cord or line of couching, but it is always easy in such work to see that it has been transferred.

For Appliqué of all kinds it is necessary to back the material, which is best done in this way : A piece of thin cotton or linen fabric is tightly stretched on to a board with tacks or drawing-pins. It is then covered smoothly and completely with paste. The wrong side of the velvet, satin, or serge, or whatever material is used, is then pressed firmly down on the pasted surface with the hands and left to dry.

The following is a good recipe for embroidery paste : Three and a half spoonfuls of flour and as much powdered resin as will lie on a quarter-dollar ; mix these well and smoothly with half a pint of water, and pour it into an iron saucepan ; put in a teaspoonful of essence of cloves, and go on stirring till it boils ; then turn it into a gallipot to cool.

Good crewels will always wash or clean without injury, but cheap and inferior worsteds will not do so. Ordinary crewel or linen may be washed at home by plunging it into a lather made by water in which bran has been boiled, or even with simple soapsuds, so long as no soda or washing-powder is used. It should be carefully rinsed, without wringing, and hung up to dry. When almost dry, it may be stretched out with drawing-pins on a board, and will not require ironing.

Embroidery on cloth or serge may often be cleaned with benzoline, applied with a piece of clean flannel; but if a piece of work is much soiled, or in the case of fine doyleys, it is safer to trust to a cleaner.

WINDOW-HANGINGS AND PORTIÈRES.

CURTAINS, for whatever purpose intended, afford ample scope for decoration. The hangings of a room help to furnish it more than anything else, and whether we consider them as necessities, as in the case of window-curtains, or as additions and, in some sort, luxuries, as in the case of *portières*, a great deal of skill is possible in their treatment.

In many houses a very pleasant effect is produced by the introduction of drapery in the hall. The entrance to a house strikes every one, and, in the majority of modern homes, the first view is usually of a stairway by no means too ornamental. In old-fashioned or in large houses, a different arrangement is met with, and the stairs seen in the background are in broken flights, with a landing opposite the doorway, which, furnished with a colored glass window, and made still more presentable by the happy introduction of flowers in a stand, or perhaps a hanging-basket, at once attracts attention. Even in such a case the pleasant effect is heightened by drapery which half frames the window; but, where the architect has been less kind, a *portière* across the entry, gracefully looped, is at once pleasant and suggestive.

So many delightful possibilities are concealed by a curtain; not to mention the skillful hiding of defects made

feasible with such means, or the softening of angles and happy obliteration of corners. Moreover, in the use of curtains, every variety of decoration becomes possible, and so much taste and skill can be shown in the selection of materials, the adaptation of patterns, and the choice of coloring, that it is not surprising that draperies of every kind receive increasing attention.

Window-curtains show off decorative needle-work most admirably, and a great deal of the general effect of a room is due to their skillful treatment. They should be chosen of materials which look well in daylight, and when drawn for the evening will show up equally well by gas or lamplight. If heavy stuffs are selected, white under-curtains are indispensable; but there are many materials of light tone and make, which, edged with lace, serve a double purpose. Curtains should never be too full, and they are more artistic when they are only just long enough to lie a few inches upon the floor.

Half the effect of handsome needle-work is lost if the width of the hanging necessitates many folds; it should be sufficiently wide to hang easily when drawn across the window, and no wider. The design, once selected, should always be worked upon the material itself, unless in the case of borderings, which may be laid on to suggest inclosing lines. Although a pair of curtains represents a cumbersome piece of work, the stitches in such embroidery are so large that the ground is easily covered, and the effect is altogether far handsomer than when the design is worked upon strips and laid on.

It is essential that curtains should harmonize with the decoration of the room; and it may be mentioned incidentally, that a great deal of effect will depend upon the choice of the carpet, which in most cases precedes

that of the hangings. As a matter of fact, a carpet has no right to *rule* the coloring of the room; it should be entirely subordinate—an accessory, as it were—that which the background is to a picture, or the green-sward to the forest; but as this is very often not the case, and the carpet may be already in place, in strong self-assertion, it must be considered, and the draperies brought into harmony with it. Where the coloring of a room is neutral, bright window-hangings are a possibility, but, generally speaking, the more sober hues are better chosen for the material, and such bright coloring as is thought desirable introduced into the working of the design. Soft fabrics hang best. Rep is too stiff for graceful effects; serge or diagonal cloth is pleasant, both for its softness in work and on account of the graceful folds into which it naturally falls.

Velveteen is also suitable for hangings, being durable and very accessible to ornament; worked in filoselle, curtains of this material are extremely handsome; velvet is rather less manageable, and does not answer so well for applied work, the pile, when it is rich, interfering with the set of the stitches.

For heavy draperies, a border design is best, or one with intervals, such as stars or crescents, which may be worked in silks or bullion; while for lighter material a continuous pattern, carried over the whole of the curtain, looks very well. Crewels, lightened by the introduction of filoselle, are best for such designs. Branching patterns, too, are well adapted for curtains, and will suit almost all materials, while, where dados are introduced, a border of different material is admissible, the depth of which must bear relation to that of the wall-paper, supposing it to be in the same style. A dado

may be embroidered before it is sewn on to the curtain, and when it has a conventional design of upright-stemmed flowers, the remainder of the hanging might be appropriately worked in single flowers of the same kind, similar in color. Curtains in two shades are often very appropriate for smaller rooms, where dadoes are a little out of place; a darker and lighter brown, for example, or two shades of gray relieved by crimson bias introduced where they are joined, would be both pretty and effective.

Summer curtains of unbleached linens, worked in crewel, admit of an almost endless variety, while there is no limit to the choice of materials suited to more elaborate and expensive drapery. Satins of creamy tint are especially manufactured for such purposes, and silks known as "unfinished" are of the neutral colors which best bear elaborate designs, while very inexpensive curtains can be made of cotton sheeting, worked in ordinary worsteds or crewels.

Portières serve a double purpose, and are invaluable either to hide or to replace a door, or as a separation between double rooms; well managed, they are exceedingly effective. They should not repeat the window-curtains, but should harmonize with them in coloring and style. *Portières*, whether single or double, should be sewn upon rings and suspended upon a pole, so that they can be drawn back at will; they should not be looped, but should fall in easy folds. Where they are intended to separate rooms of different character, they can be made double—of one color and material on the one side, and of something suitable to the coloring of the other room upon the reverse.

It is a very usual thing to make *portières* of two or

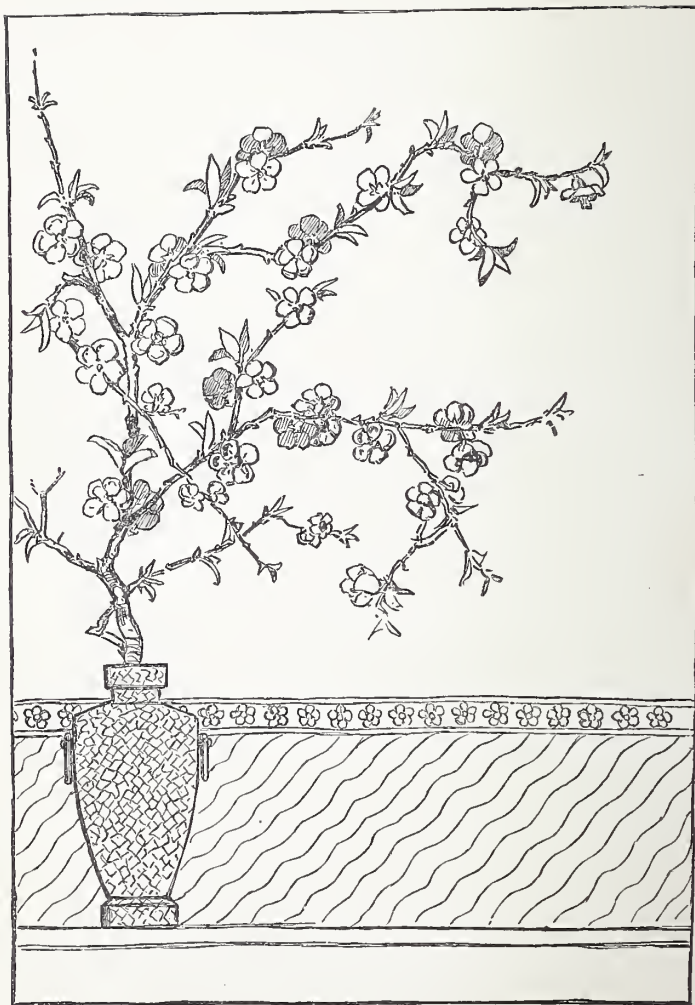


FIG. 19.

three different materials; for example, in panels or with a border, more or less deep, of one material, and the remainder of something different. For example (in Fig. 19), we have a very simple design, which becomes most effective when worked upon different materials—the upper part, for instance, in satin, the lower in plush, with satin bands. The suggestions of the artist for the treatment of this *portière* are, that the upper panel should be of whitish yellow satin, the flowers, which are peach-blossoms, worked in pink and crimson, the lower part of the branch in bluish gray, with brown touches, and the smaller stems yellow, with reddish shadows. A delicate green should be chosen for the young leaves. The lower panel should be of salmon-pink plush and the vase of light blue, the markings in gold thread, while the waving tracery of the plush panels should be in black, and a warm brown plush border complete the hanging at the bottom. Just above the salmon plush a blue bordering with conventional flowers in pink with deep red centers, with bands above and below of yellow satin, will throw up the design with admirable contrasts.

The same design could be carried out upon simpler material, attention being given to the coloring suggested for the details; it would look well in almost any soft material with neutral ground, the colors employed in the rendering being bright and harmonious.

An effective design (Fig. 20) is also intended for the use of satin and plush, and the suggestions for its working are that the most satisfactory result would be produced by “on-laying.” Three different plushes are recommended. For the upper panel, a mixed shade of brown and red; the side bands to be of sage-green, and a warm greenish brown to be chosen for the bottom. The treat-

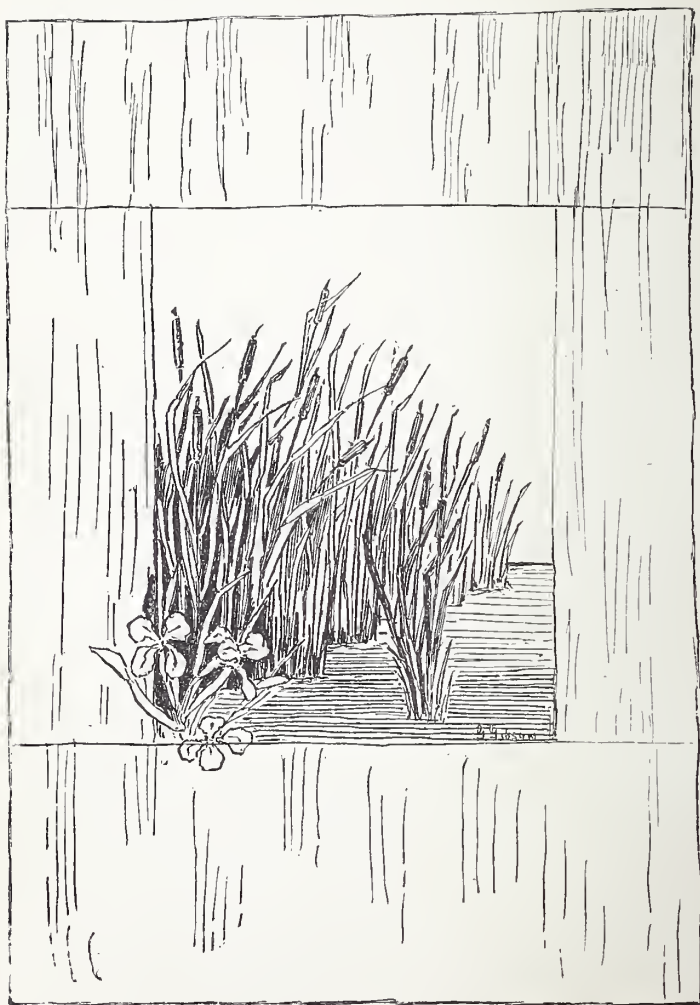


FIG. 20.

ment suggested for the center would be difficult but most effective, and would amply repay the time and care bestowed upon it. Delicate whitish-yellow satin could be taken as a ground above the water-line, with blue satin for the water itself, the ripples being suggested by darker lines of blue in silk or worsted upon the surface, while the mass of deeper color in the corner could be managed by the introduction of a darker material of the depth of color desired, and by so cutting it and inlaying it by *appliqué*, that the ends of some of the rush-leaves would be shown over it as if on the border, while the effect of distance could be produced by cutting out, in *lighter* material, the reeds that occupy the foreground. In treating the water, the same idea of perspective can be given by making the ripples toward the bottom of the panel close together, and widening the distances by degrees, until, about half way up to the water-line, they should cease altogether.

This design might be very well treated if the center panel were painted upon satin, or worked in simple outline stitch in well-assorted silks.

Such materials would necessarily make a *portière* in this style a serious expense, and therefore another design (Fig. 21) is given to show what may be accomplished by the use of moderate means. It represents a hanging which can be completed in every detail for a sum scarcely exceeding four dollars. The body of the *portière* could be of any mixed material (that stamped with a Persian pattern is best), which can be bought, fifty-one inches wide, for one dollar and a half a yard, while a yard and a quarter of velveteen, at one dollar a yard, will be sufficient for the bands and center design. Even if simply put on by *appliqué* work, this style of decoration is very effective, but designs might be worked upon the velvet, if de-

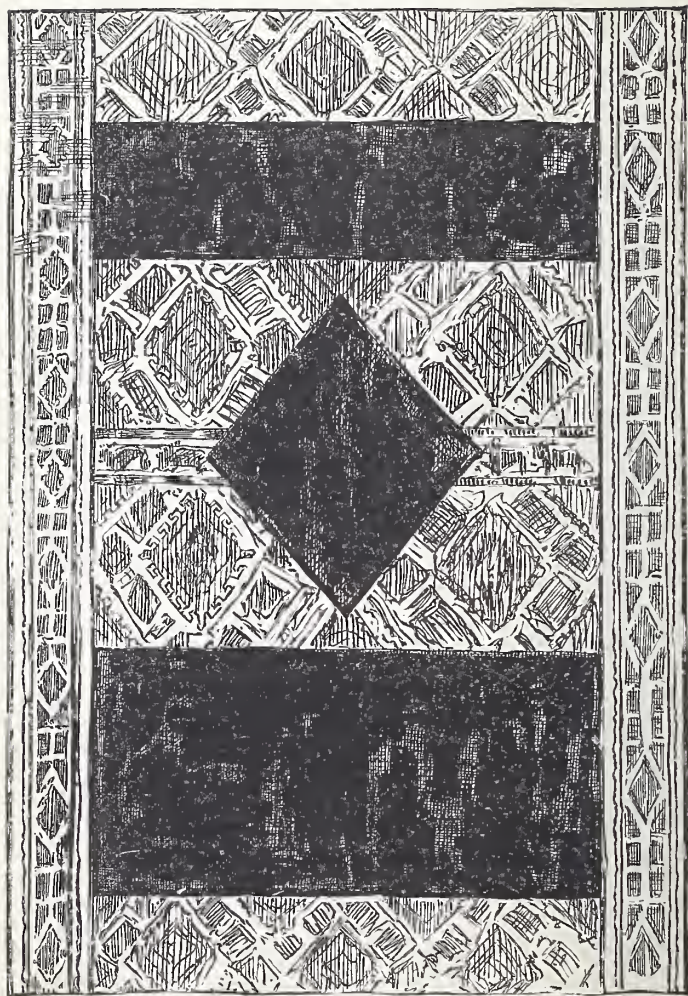


FIG. 21.



FIG. 22.

sired, to suit any taste ; or, again, stamped velvet, in rich colors, could be used upon Canton flannel, or plain material of some neutral tint.

A design of sunflowers, with a deep plush bordering, upon which conventionalized flowers of the same kind are laid, is very effective for hangings. The upper panel (in Fig. 22) might be of light-blue cloth, the flowers worked in crewels, and the lower panel of deep-blue plush, the flowers upon this having a black center, and the outer circle of the leaves being worked in bright yellow.

Fig. 23 is intended for an *appliqué* design, and represents conventionalized calla-lilies. In this hanging, the suggestions are for a pale, greenish-blue, lusterless material for the body of the curtain ; the leaves on the border and upon the center panel to be of pearl-colored satin, put on by *appliqué* work, while the flowers should be of *dead white*, without luster, as should also the plain bordering and ornament at the bottom of the center frame. This would be a most delicate piece of decoration, suitable for a *boudoir* or morning-room.

The introduction of a center panel, painted upon satin, is novel and effective. Such a design (see Fig. 24) might be treated either by the brush or by the needle. A branch of maple, with its brilliant autumn-leaves, is represented upon a ground of pale-yellow satin, and the hill-side is suggested by a few light touches, which, if painted, are easily conveyed, and, if treated as embroidery, could be outlined by the introduction of plush inlaid. The borderings of this *portière* should be of rich dark brown, the waving design being traced in outline-stitch or crewel in bright gold or yellows, or, indeed, in any bright colors which might be preferred. The autumnal shades would

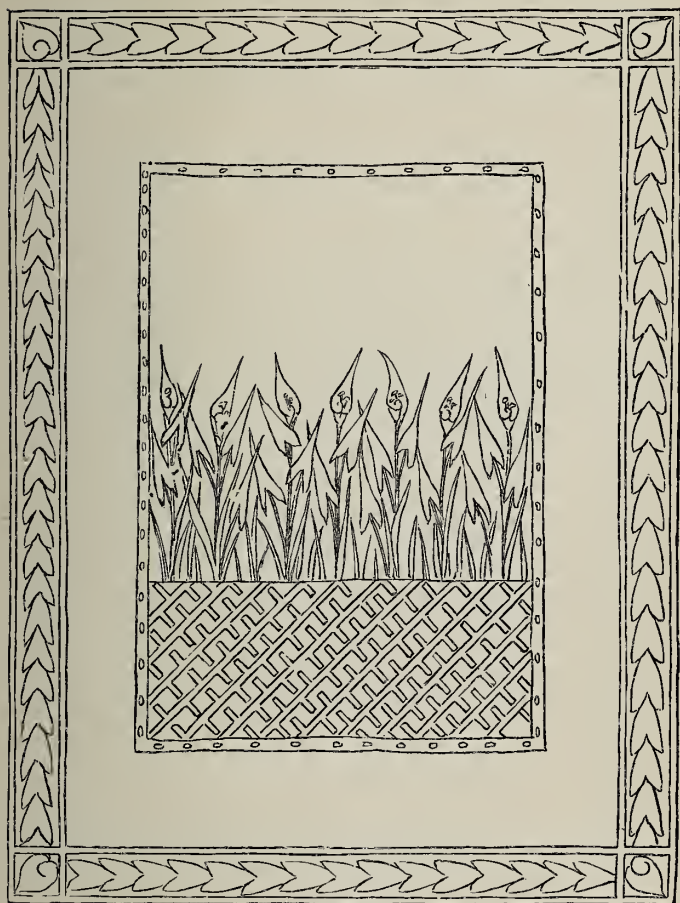


FIG. 23.

probably be better conveyed by the brush than by the needle.

An entirely novel idea, both as to design and treatment, is suggested in our next design (Fig. 25). The up-

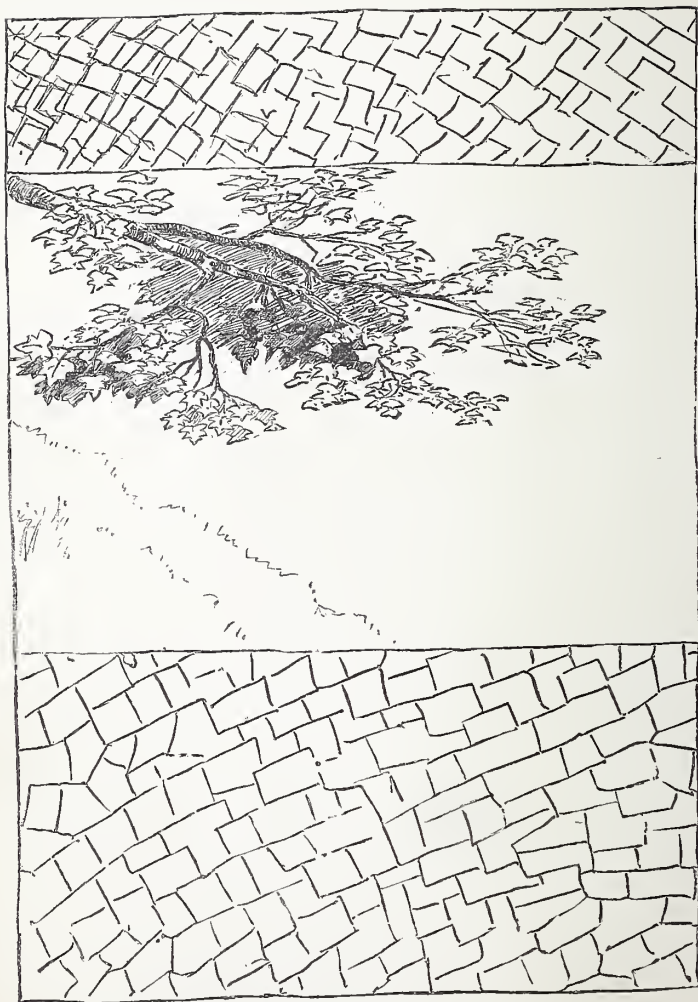


FIG. 24.

per panel is intended to be of sea-green plush, as dark as can be obtained, the lower to be very deep blue of the same material. The upper and lower bands should be of sage-green, the center panel being bordered above by light-blue satin, and below by sea-green with the water-lines worked on. The meshes of the net should be of yellow silk, so arranged that the shadows are well brought out. This could be effectively done in couching work, and a very original finish might be given if the floats were represented by rounds of leather, stitched on.

The gull should be in grayish white. The border design, which is a representation of sea-fern conventionalized, must be worked in outline-stitch in gold silks.

Very often a *portière* which would be rich and effective in a single curtain would hardly bear duplication. Simple designs are better in the case of double doors, or for a doorway so large as to require a pair of curtains. For such a purpose, plain hangings with effective borderings, or with plain bands or panels without much decorative work, are the best. Such curtains might be made of dull gold-colored cloth, bordered with pale pink; or a conventional foliage pattern, designed for the border and worked in dark browns, would look well; so too would upright flowers, with leaves which might appear to rise from the dark border; the outlines and leaves being in deeper colors and the flowers in pink.

Two shades of colors, again, are suitable for double doorways; in such cases the darker shade should be the lowest, the lighter one looking better above, either with or without decoration; or a frieze-like border in *cinq-ue-cento* style, about two feet from the top, is very effective. Simple and inexpensive *portières* can be readily made of fashion drapery with bands of darker material. Being the same

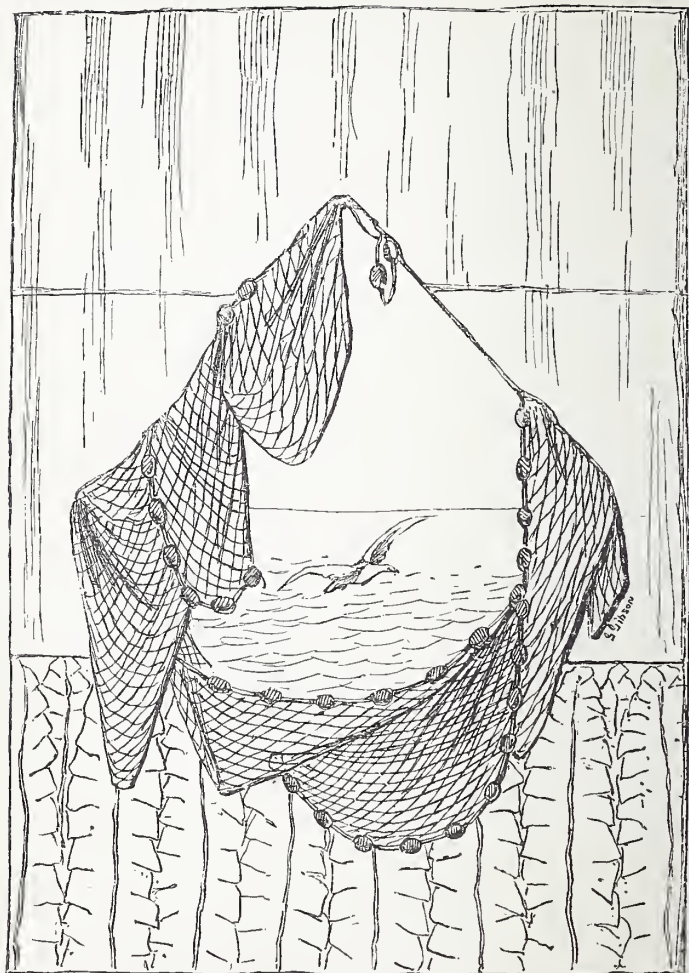


FIG. 25.

on both sides, it would only be necessary to duplicate the bands, varying them to suit the coloring of two rooms.

Very little trimming is usually needed for *portières*; but some persons like fringes, or heavy laces, which can always be added at will.

Book-case curtains are desirable additions in libraries; for these, soft materials with conventional borderings or severe patterns are best. A plain Grecian design is admirable in dark colors.

Fig. 26 represents a very quaint and appropriate design for such a curtain, which might be used either as a *portière* or simply as a hanging before the book-case. So, too, it can either be made a most inexpensive decoration, if it is simply of thin muslin or linen, the bordering being of darker material, and the pattern worked in ordinary silks or crewels; or, it might be extremely handsome. If the latter effect is desired, velvet or plush of deep chocolate-brown or maroon might be selected; the center design being worked in rich blue silks, and the bordering of crimson velvet or plush, embroidered in gold. The value of this and other designs given in this manual lies precisely in the large margin allowed in each for individual taste and judgment. There is scarcely one among them that is not susceptible of treatment in several different ways, and they will amply repay the necessary effort and time bestowed upon them, whether they are made of the plainest or richest material, whether their money value is great or small.

The Openings and Walls of a Room.—Some rooms seem to be all doors; in whatever direction one turns, the eye is confronted by an opening; and it is becoming very usual to drape the entire room in a way that shall make such necessities, as far as possible, parts of an harmonious whole.

Wall-hangings assist in producing this effect, and a

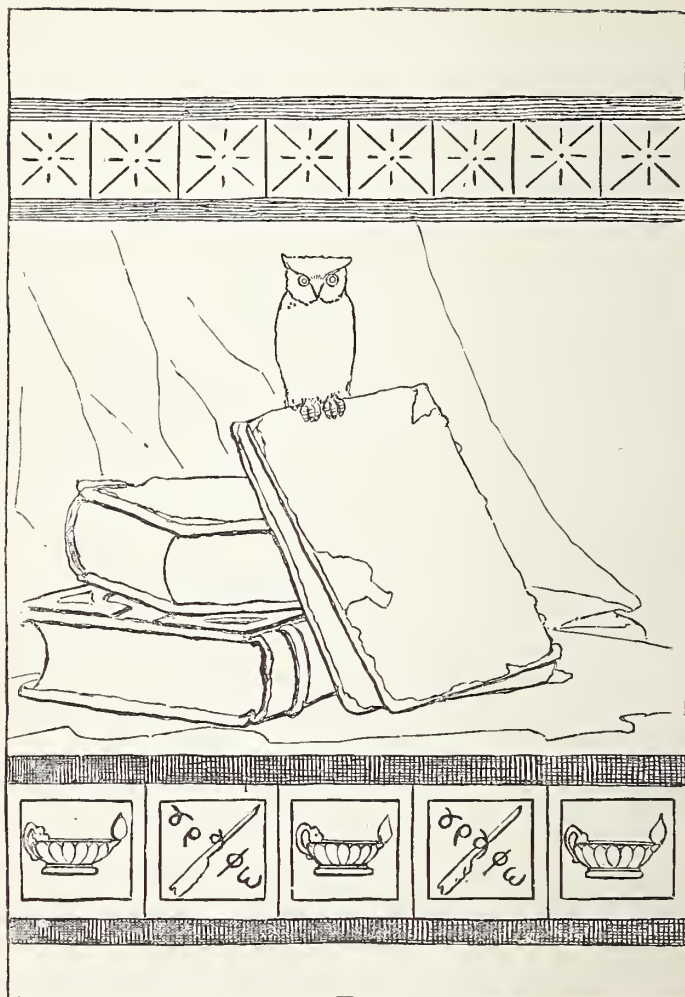


FIG. 26.

few suggestions may serve to show how, by the use of simple means, agreeable results may be obtained.

The best material for such hangings is Kentucky jean, which is known in the stores as "dennin," and which is of dull-blue color. Cloth of light dull red might be used for the marginal designs, which require to be stitched on. The design given in our frontispiece is simple and easy; but as other margins could equally well be used with it, a variety of such patterns is given. Of these, the first (Fig. 27) represents morning-glories; it might be cut in cloth and appliquéd on to a bordering of any color selected, the leaves being veined in darker silk or crewel, and if the chalices of the glories were in green, the effect would be enhanced. The second margin, of conventionalized buttercups (Fig. 28), might be effectively rendered in yellow cloth flowers appliquéd upon a dark ground, the leaves in green cloth, veined in darker color. The corn in the third (Fig. 29) and the rushes in the last design (Fig. 30) would serve equally well for *appliqué* work in cloths of the natural colors upon deep-toned grounds.

The hangings in such decoration (excepting those which lie flat against the wall) should be lined, in order that their straight hanging may be insured. Our designs for such drapery (Figs. 35 and 36) represent the wall-hanging as the length of the mantel. The borderings should always be stitched on before the hanging is fixed upon the wall. That being done, the dado is ready, and should be fastened on to the wall with long brass nails, which will reach through the laths, both at the top and bottom (see Fig. 34). To carry out the intentions of this drapery, the first requisite for the mantel-piece is a pine-board shelf, which will project about an inch over the edge and

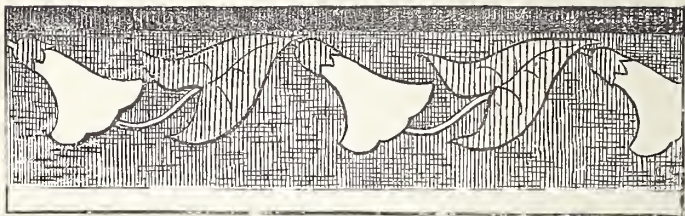


FIG. 27.

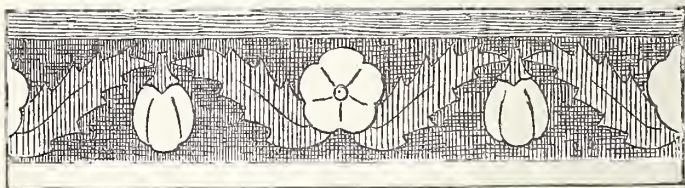


FIG. 28.

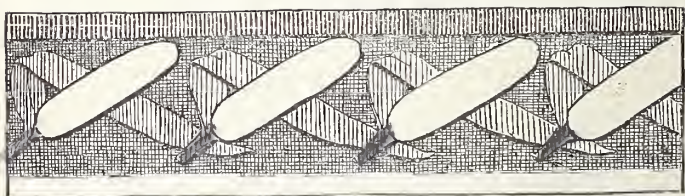


FIG. 29.

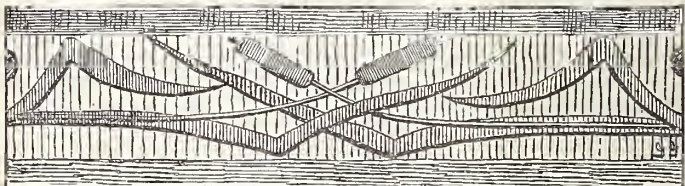


FIG. 30.

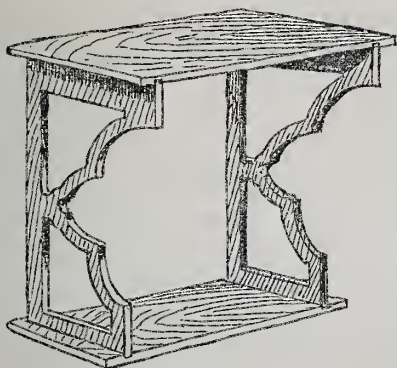


FIG. 31.

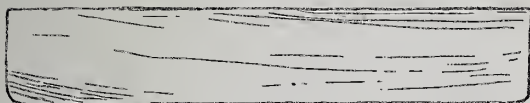


FIG. 32



FIG. 33.

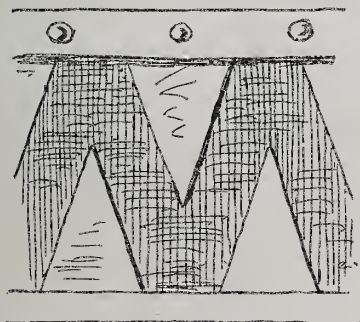


FIG. 34.

ends. A smaller shelf (as in Fig. 31) is easily made; it should be about sixteen inches high and of proportionate width. A bar and rings will be required for the hanging above the mantel, and strips of pine, from three eighths of an inch to an inch and a half in width, to fasten the dado at the top; while the strips at the bottom should be quarter round. All the wood should be stained either red or black. For the windows and doors, a piece of pine, stained (see Fig. 32), with brackets on either side to support it, is required, and a bar for the rings of the *portière* is necessary (as in Fig. 33).

The walls between the dado and ceiling might be tinted a dull warm red or olive, and the same pattern as that on the dado could be run round the paneling at the top of the wall. The window-drapery should be managed exactly like that of the doorway, and the general effect will be pleasing and unique. Embroidered hangings are sometimes selected to cover the entire surface of the walls, and although in most cases paper-hangings appear more suitable, especially with the many pictures and ornaments found in modern homes, attempts have been made to revive the old tapestry effects. It seems a pity to bestow so much valuable work, if any of it is to be hidden; but where it is very elaborate, it can be made the principal decoration of the room. If this is the intention, a needle-work tapestry which has been introduced may be employed; but it is very difficult work, and could only be carried out successfully under competent guidance. The designs for such an undertaking should be of the nature of picture-cartoons.

A more simple effect is recommended by Miss Glaisner, and is managed by "a narrow, frieze-like hanging above a dado, of width proportioned to it, and worked

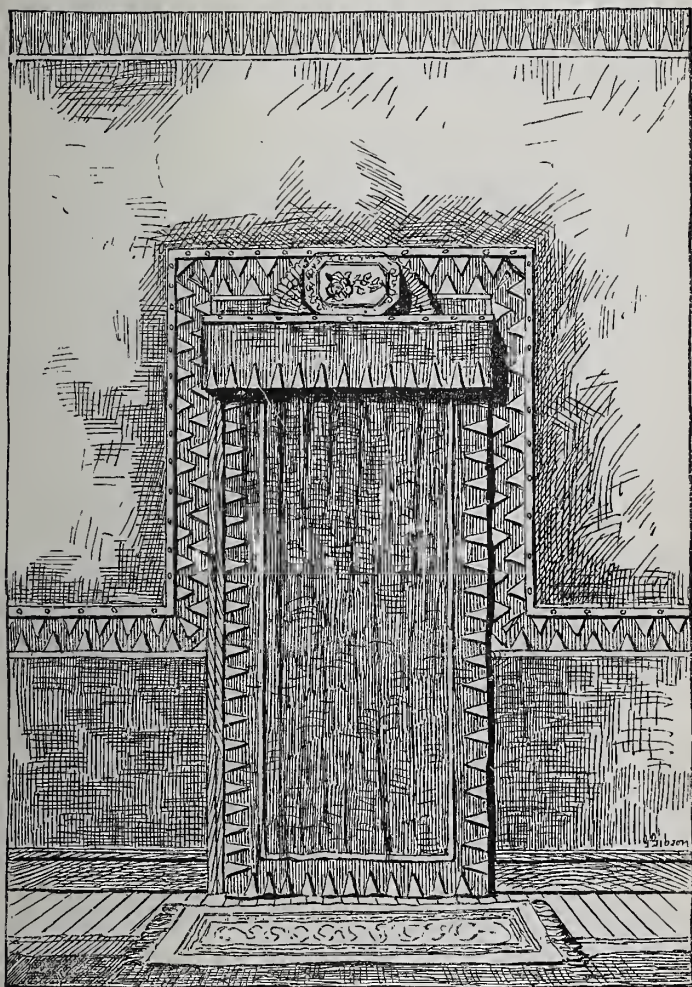


FIG. 35.

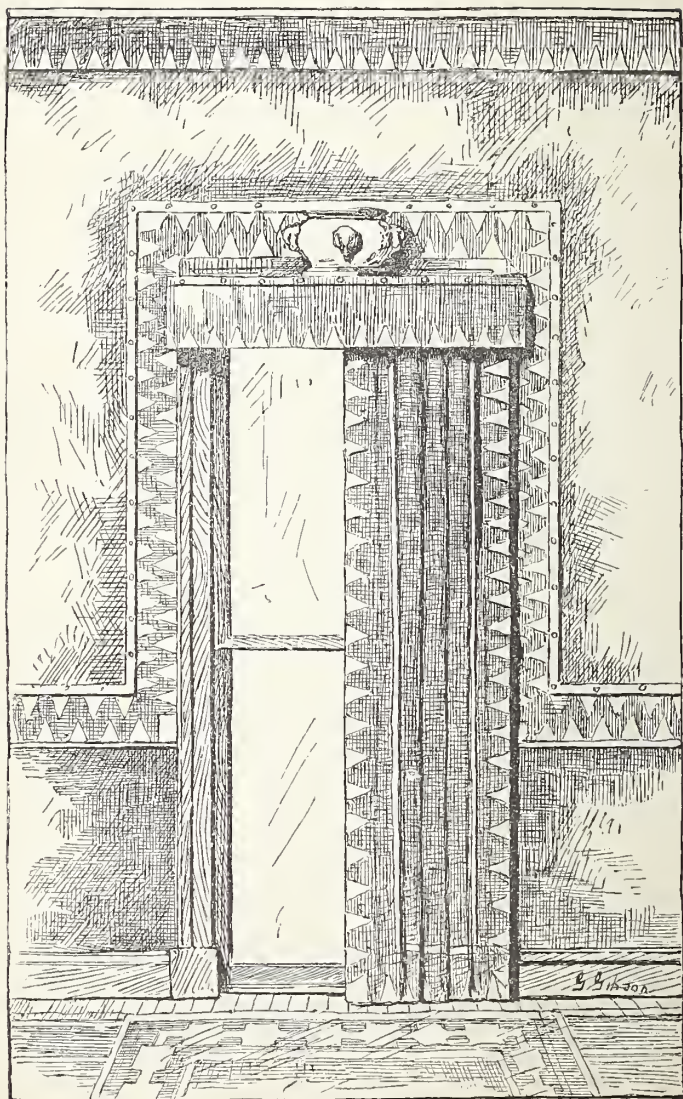


FIG. 26.

with stiff, upright stems of flowers, highly conventionalized; or, at even distances, pots in outline, with a group of flowers of one sort in each pot." "A running, frieze-like pattern in *cinq-ue-cento* style, intermixed with birds or curious devices," is also suggested, but this requires a good deal of care in both design and treatment, and, in short, it is a little difficult to make wall-hangings repay the time and skill which must be expended upon them.

VI.

SCREENS.

FROM being merely unwieldy contrivances to shelter from draught or the heat of the fire, screens have become among the greatest ornaments of a modern home. They are to be met with in every variety, from the priceless inlaid structure, with its plate-glass panels, between which grow rare and graceful ferns and mosses, to the simply covered wooden frame, of home manufacture, which has been beautified at no expense. Within these limits range an infinite variety, and no useful object in a home affords more scope for decoration than this. Size varies as much as style, but the most serviceable is certainly the three-folded ordinary parlor-screen.

In many houses in European countries, screens answer the double purpose of concealing the bed and making the parlor beautiful—so often does one apartment serve two purposes—and hence the height of many of the screens is greater than is considered elegant in American homes. The famous Louis Quinze screens are of every conceivable variety, in frameworks of ebony filled in with rich satin or velvet brocades, and embroidered in raised silks, plushes, or even feathers. Arms emblazoned, initials cunningly intertwined, portraits even introduced in medallion, exquisite landscapes painted upon china, or still more elaborate designs in needle-work inclosed in

glass, are all suggestive of the pageantry of a luxurious age. But we have to do with the fashions of to-day, and although the last exhibition of decorative needle-work showed a marked tendency to bring extraneous materials into the service (one very elegant three-paneled screen having artificial flowers sewn on, and others introducing feathers), artistic judgment was against the innovation, and the preference decidedly given to those whose beauty was due to fairy needle-work or painting alone.

One of the richest screens it has ever been our fortune to behold is in private possession in New York. It is of white watered silk, inclosed in ivory frames, and embroidered in many-colored silks with a waving bordering of flowers, so artistically wrought that it is more like a parterre of living beauty than a mere representation. This elaborate screen, however, is Japanese, and our needle-workers have yet much to learn before they can hope to out-rival the skill of the East.

Chinese screens, again, are fairly bewildering to the eye in the variety and vividness of their design and coloring; but colors that seem appropriate to the magnificence of Eastern imagery are less so in our every-day lives, and we would recommend to those who propose to work a screen for themselves, a selection of the more subdued tints which are to be found assorted in every decorative store. Cloth, perhaps, is the most satisfactory material for a standing screen, while for the banner screens, which so improve the mantel-shelf, or those which are arranged on rings to draw round a corner or shield a couch from the draught, various stuffs are equally good.

As screens afford so much scope for every variety of treatment, designs are found to suit different tastes, and many of those given in our manual can be appropri-

ately worked either in silks or in *appliqué* work; or, if preferred, may be painted upon silk, satin, or velvet.

Of these, that represented in Fig. 37 would be very beautiful for a three-paneled screen, the cherry-blossoms being selected as the center, and the apple-blossoms duplicated for the two ends; or the panel in Fig. 39, the cornsheaf with birds, would make a very effective center panel in combination with the cherry and apple-blossoms on either side. Of course, it would answer equally well as it is, for a twofold screen.

The material (if the screen is intended for an ordinary parlor or reception-room) should be of dark cloth, and the silks in which the apple-blossoms are worked, pink and white, while the center panel, with a ground of lighter tone, might have the blossom clusters in scarlet. Again, should painting be preferred, the designs executed in natural colors upon white velvet, or neutral-tinted satin or silk, would be very lovely. In the latter case, the hill-side should be a mere suggestion, only sufficiently indicated to act as memory, and not by any means be given too prominently, because the branch represents the *motive* of the design, and the hill is a mere accessory.

We point this out more particularly, because a frequent mistake in the work of beginners, either in artistic needle-work or in painting, is a tendency to give undue prominence to accessories. There should always be *one spot* or point to which the remainder is subordinate; the key-note, as it were, or, in artistic parlance, the highest light.

While this can not be too much insisted upon as an absolute necessity, if needle-work is to deserve the name of art, we are equally mindful of the fact that the other



FIG. 37.

extreme, which is often met with in the work of amateurs, is almost equally bad, and that a total ignoring of subor-

dinate facts is to be as cautiously avoided as the reverse. Thus, in the treatment of the four designs in Fig. 38,

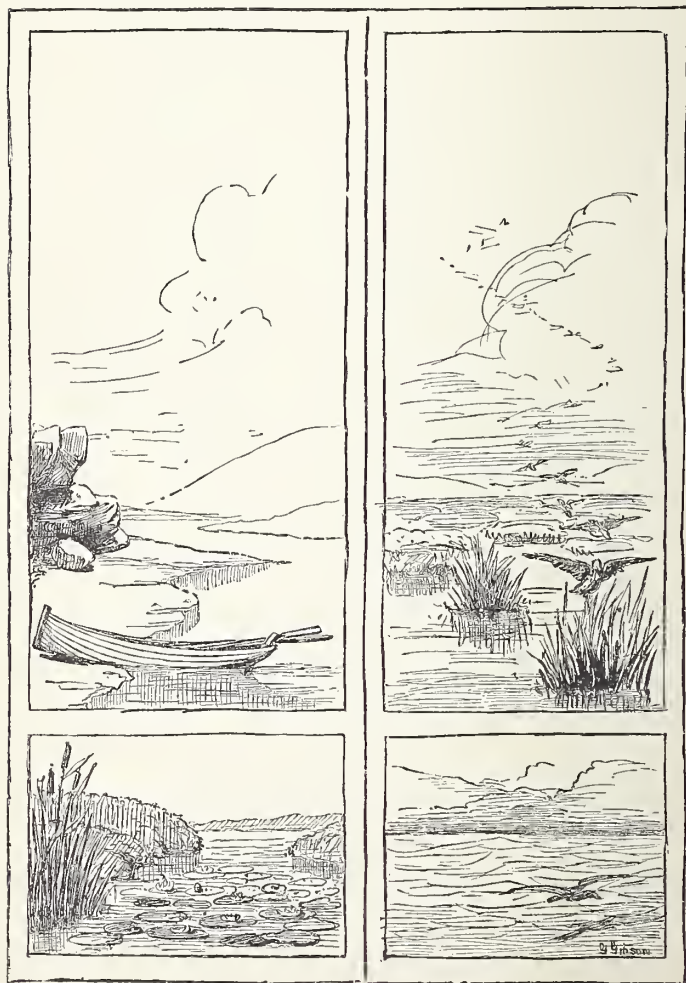


FIG. 38.

which are perhaps most suitable for painting upon silk, satin, or velvet, a great deal will depend upon the treatment of the distances. In the first panel an outlined hill is presented, which by skillful treatment will gain in height and distance; and, in the second, the clouds, which are merely suggested, afford in reality the limitations of the swallows' flight; and here a *gray* effect, deepening a little as the last bird is lost in it, would be invaluable, for it would give a certain imagination to the flight, and furnish the idea of a coming shower, which the instinct of the birds has already foreseen.

The water-lilies in the lower division of the first panel would be very beautiful if worked in silks, a darker shade of green marking the outer edge, which the water kisses as it flows; the flowers rising in dead white, with one golden petal (worked in French knot), and the reeds should be rendered in russet-brown silks.

The design in Fig. 39 is intended for a double screen, but here again three folds can be managed equally well, by duplicating the first, and making the corn-sheaf with the birds the center. Anything prettier or more effective than this last can scarcely be conceived, or more suitable either for needle or brush. If treated by the former, blue satin as a background, with the birds, as far as possible, in the graduated browns, yellows, and whites of their natural plumage, and the corn in its own colors, would be exquisite; such a design affords great scope for individual taste, and a little study of the different lights required for the birds' wings in flight or at rest would enable the worker to produce something really artistic, whether in water-colors or in graduated shades of silk. Supposing blue to be the groundwork of the center, pink might appropriately be



FIG. 39.

chosen as the foundation of the beautiful blossoms of the side-panels, which should be worked in raised white, with

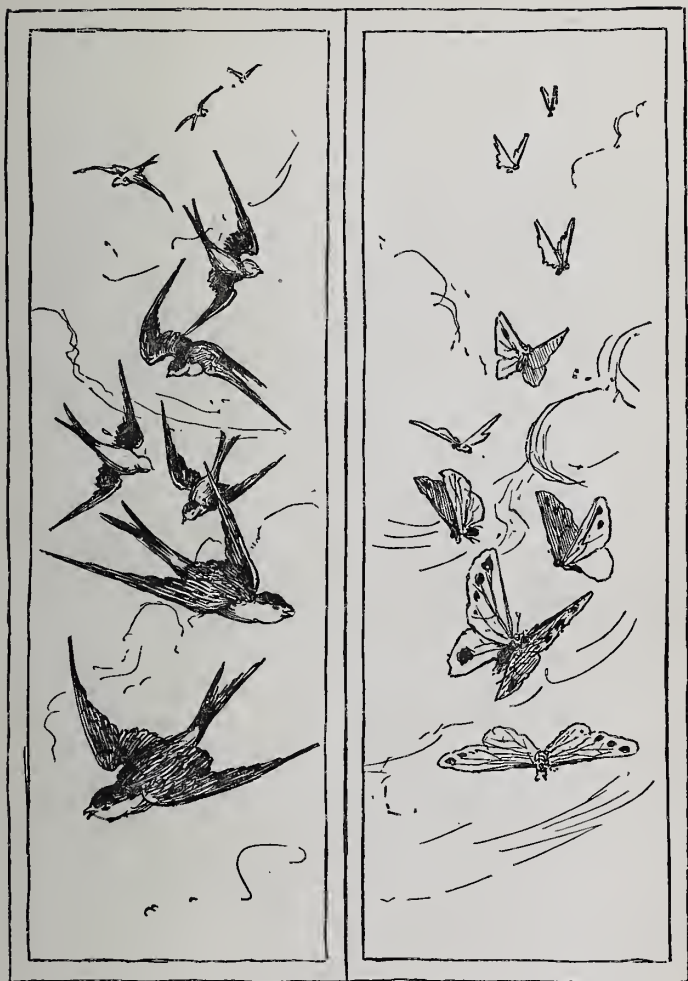


FIG. 40.

delicate green leaves, while the reeds in brown would throw up the whites and grays of the duck and her brood.

If blue satin were inserted above the water-line, and darker silks worked in, the ripple of a sunny lake would be most happily suggested.

In the design in Fig. 40, a great deal must depend upon the sky effects, whether it is worked out by brush or needle. A background of gray satin might suggest the clouded summer sky beneath which the swallows are flying, and the blue of their plumage, with delicate white tone for the breasts, would be in delightful harmony with it; while, for the "butterflies" sunning in the warmth of noon-day, blue, with only tiny fleecy flecks of transparent white, would not only make the design "alive," but, if it were the center of three, would contrast admirably with the outer panels of cloudier foreboding.

The design in Fig. 41 is somewhat realistic. In communicating the happy effect of waving to the field of wheat, the artist has resorted to the expedient of a fallen branch in the foreground, upon the treatment of which much will depend. Browns, deep enough to make it certain that it has fallen recently (since the wheat has attained a certain height at least), but not so nearly black as to suggest an artificial coloring, are what is needed. The golden brown of the wheat upon a background of pearl-gray would be very pure, while at the same time, if required for constant use, a more serviceable selection of dark color for the groundwork might be found in deep maroon or green velvet or cloth, while the companion panel could be of dark crimson or olive-green, with the design in natural colors.

The design in Fig. 42 is intended for an oblong screen, and the artist's suggestion for the treatment is a background of blue, the wheat to be appliquéd on in brown gold cloth, and the ears suggested by points cut out and



FIG. 41.

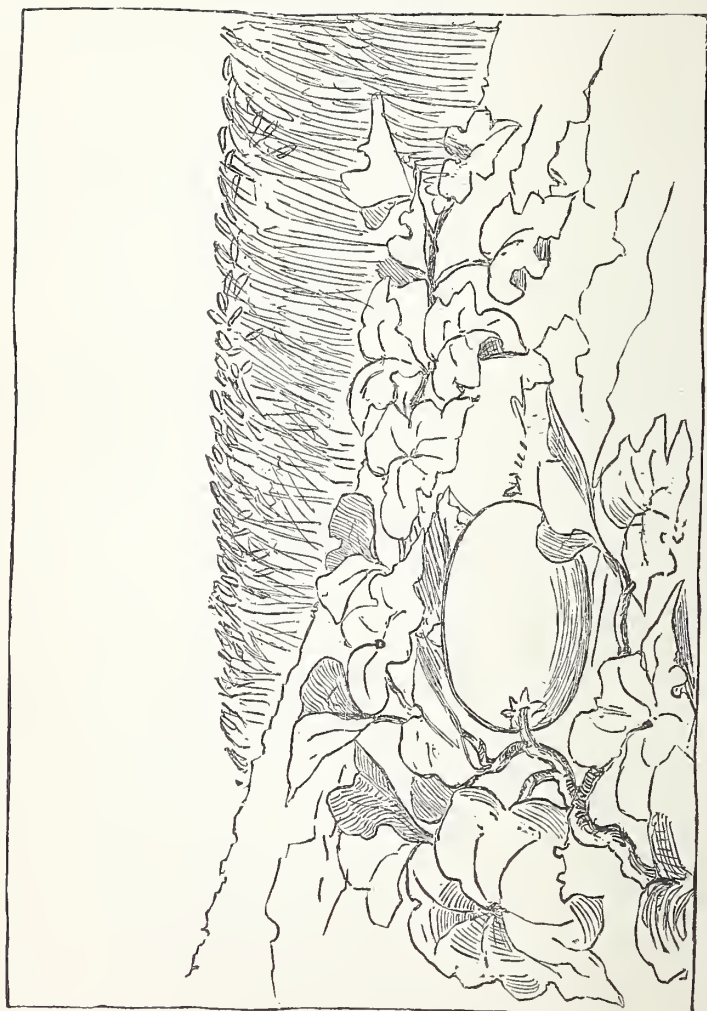


Fig. 42.

worked in silk. The leaves, in *appliqué* of green cloth, would allow of light and shade, and the highest light should be on the fruit, which should be worked in raised silks of deepening gold.

Before leaving the subject of standing screens, a word may be useful regarding framing. The effect of good work is often spoiled by the use of ugly and inappropriate frames. As regards color, black is preferable to almost anything else, and for ordinary rooms, the simpler the design the better, while, for more elaborate purposes, a frame to match the heavy furniture in style would be desirable. Again, if any particular wood is in use in the decoration of a room, it would be well to select that for the frame of the screen ; at the same time, black will be found both suitable for every kind of work, and for almost any style of decoration. In screens in which birds are the principal subject, as in Fig. 40, a frame with carved birds would be suggestive. Large folding screens for bedrooms can be made very handsomely in brown linens or serge, with conventional designs in crewels, upright and stiff flowers being most suitable for the purpose. Thistles make an admirable design. Dadoes of darker material have a good effect. Upon a brown linen screen a dado of dark green, worked in field-flowers, with the pattern above, on the brown linen, of tall garden hollyhocks or tiger-lilies, in a mixture of crewels and silks, is very effective. Such a screen is admirable in a passage, or round a bedroom door. Peacocks have always been favorite subjects for screen designs, but, to be at all desirable, the form must be strictly conventionalized, and the background dark, to soften the brilliant colors of the plumage, which in any case it is difficult to harmonize equally and well.

Japanese designs have had a long popularity, and will probably continue to do so; but they are to be met

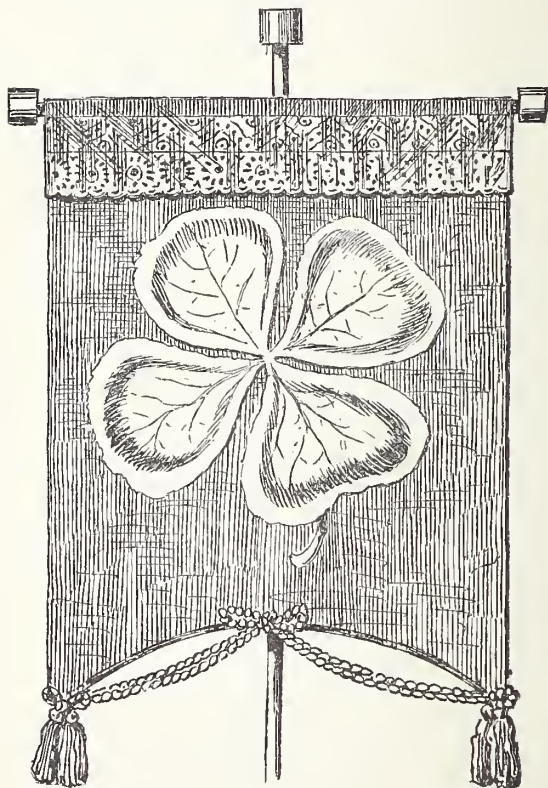


FIG. 43.

with in such infinite variety in the many articles adorned by them, that suggestions regarding them are needless. As a rule, each division of a Japanese design has a distinct end and meaning, although to the uninitiated the patterns have a bewildering disorder; but a little study shows

that such confusion is the result of the highest art, and is in strict accordance with the laws of symmetry and proportion.

Some of the latest designs for larger screens have

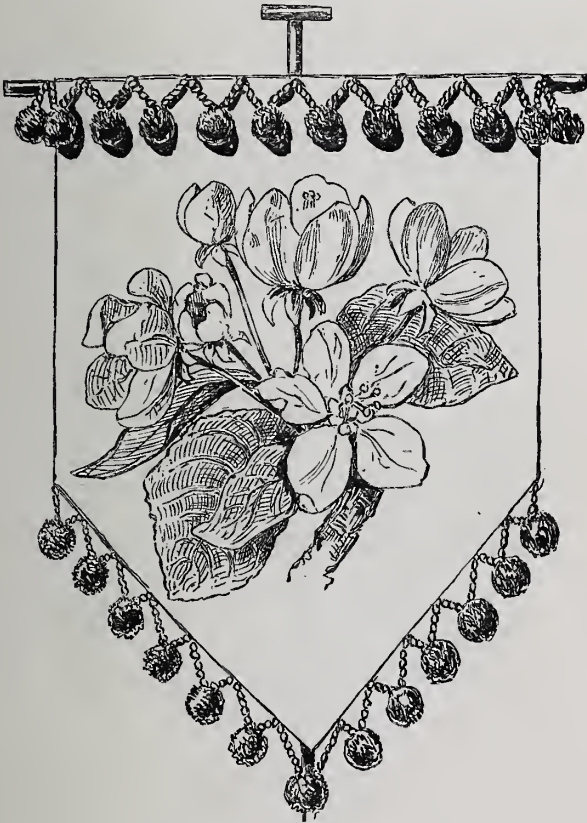


FIG. 44.

been representations of the human figure in action ; but, although great results have occasionally been obtained,

and good effects produced, such representations are very difficult, and a few stitches out of place here or there produce such lamentable results that, as a matter of fact, human beings are as well left out of needle-work designs

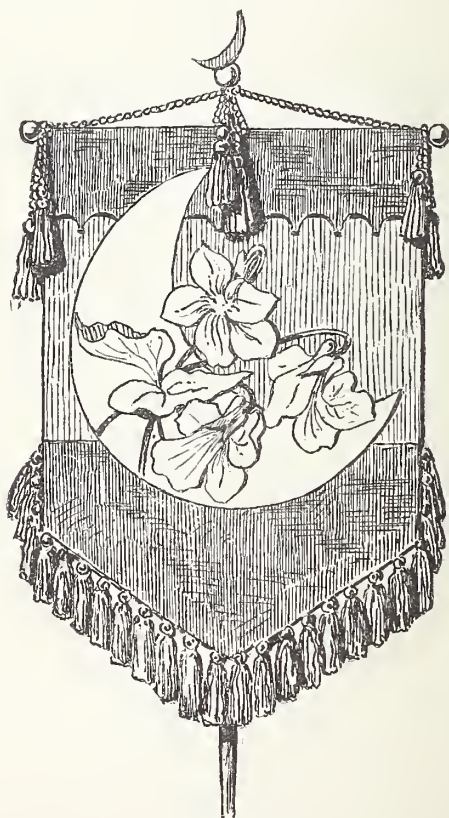


FIG. 45.

altogether. In ancient embroidery, we are accustomed to the stiff, conventionalized features of the actors in the

dramatized scenes ; but in our more natural epoch, unless something fanciful is connected with it, the “human



FIG. 46.

face divine ” presents difficulties which are almost unconquerable, and the same may be said of the figure.

There is absolutely no limit to the variety of materials employed for smaller screens. Banner screens, fastened

to the mantel-shelf, are best arranged upon rings to hang upon a cross-bar, or very pretty fittings of ebonized wood are made, with brass ends and rings.

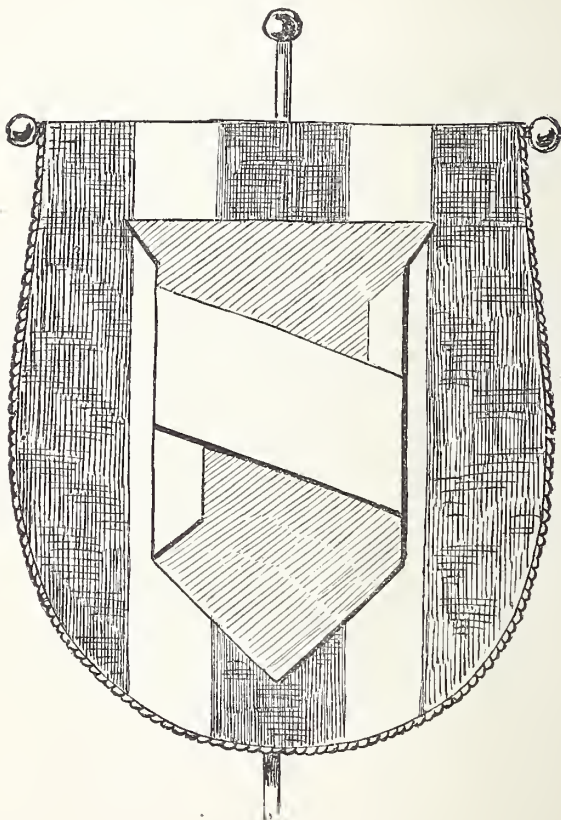


FIG. 47.

Of the designs intended for such a purpose, that in Fig. 43 is very simple and at the same time very effective. A background of dead gold velvet should be chosen,

with a strip of Macramé lace across the top, as nearly the same color as possible ; the clover might be rendered in light green cloth, appliquéd on, and the variations, veins, and shades could be worked upon it in darker silks or



FIG. 48.

crewels. This screen would be suited either for an upright stand of cherry-wood, or for a cross-bar with rings. The screen designed in Fig. 44 should have a ground of

light-blue velvet or silk with ball-fringe to match, and the design of apple-blossoms could be either painted on the silk or velvet, or worked in colored silks. Fittings of black wood would be very suitable. Both the designs represented in Figs. 45 and 46 are intended for *ap-*

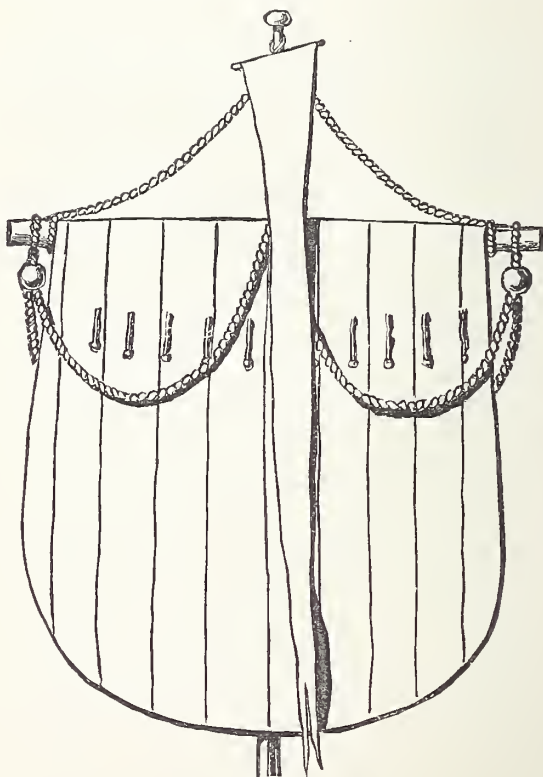


FIG. 49.

pliqué work. The lovely disk designs of the first should be on a center strip of pearl-blue, and the top and bot-

tom borders are intended to be of sage-green plush, with cord and tassels to match. The flowers, which

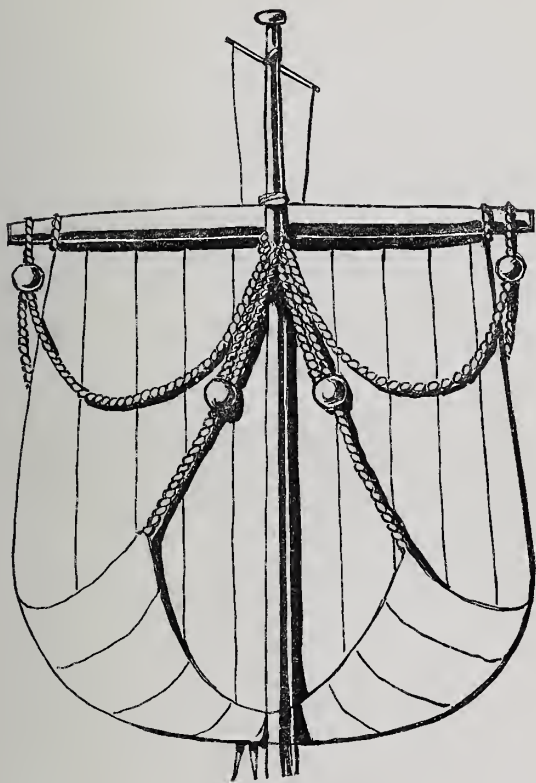


FIG. 50.

are wild violets, should be purple with light centers, and could be either painted or embroidered. In the second, an old-gold ground is recommended, in combination with sage-green; the disks should be of light-yellow satin, while the flowers, "Innocence," might be worked in pale

blue with yellow centers on the first, and the clover on the second should be in pink. The cords and balls of the hanging should be of yellow, and the fringe at the bottom of sage-green.

Another variety is afforded by Fig. 47, in which great scope for fancy is allowed. Almost any material would be suitable, either in a striped pattern, or with strips laid on, while the shield in the center could be worked with heraldic device or monogram. Fig. 48 simply represents a screen of plain stiff or dark silk, with a bouquet of everlasting flowers fastened beneath a broad band of lace. The color in this screen must be left to individual taste. There is a good deal of novelty in the design given in Figs. 49 and 50 of conventionalized sails. The material for such a screen might be striped, or alternate strips of different colors might be laid upon a plain ground, while the back could be of stuff of some different pattern. The pulleys could be represented by beads, and the ropes by twisted silks or cords, while the standard or cross work would be effective either in metal or wood.

A motto might be appropriately worked upon the pennant.

VII.

LAMBREQUINS AND SMALL PANELS.

LAMBREQUINS play an important part in home decoration. They are favorite subjects for the employment of needle-work, for two reasons: first, because they are effective, and secondly, because they are easily and quickly made. A set of curtains for even a small room is somewhat of an undertaking, but a lambrequin can be attempted by the most modest worker.

The largest and most important effort in this direction is in the ornamentation of the mantel-shelf. In houses and flats, where the latest improvements are made, chimney-places are becoming very attractive. The use of tiles, and carved or ornamental woodwork, adds charmingly to the pleasant aspect of a room; but in older houses the mantel is apt to be a great eyesore. Sometimes constructed of the commonest material, and almost always of unsightly shape and harsh outline, the sooner it is covered up the better.

A good deal of judgment is required in the selection of mantel-decoration. The choice of curtains and *portières*, as we have seen, must be more or less regulated by the carpet and wall-papering, and now the lambrequin, which is a distinct feature in the apartment, may be made either the pleasantest or the most painful object to greet an entrance into a room. Once more we must

insist that a sense of fitness and harmony is the most essential qualification for a worker. It is a good plan to have a neutral background for a mantel lambrequin, and to select such a combination of colors as shall make a variety in the general effect by giving a warm spot of color which may contrast with the prevailing tone of the decorations of the room. Different shades of the same color are often pleasant for this purpose, the mantel being an object which is so much and so constantly in view, and, for the same reason, a quiet conventional design is almost always suitable, as it is less tiring when constantly in sight than a more suggestive one might be.

Such conventional designs, worked in one colored silk or crewel upon darker ground, are good in effect. That given in Fig. 51, of conventionalized dandelions, could be effectively treated in such a way ; for example, if upon claret-colored or maroon velvet, the design might be worked in gold-colored filoselle. A very happy idea of a chain is conveyed by the links, which could be golden too, or might be of emerald-green. Such a lambrequin is intended to fit tightly round the mantel, the foundation being made in the first instance by a plain wooden shelf, projecting one inch, but otherwise exactly the size and shape of that to be covered. Upon this board the same kind of velvet is tightly stretched, and the hanging, having been arranged to fit it exactly, should be nailed on with invisible tacks, over which a narrow gimp of maroon-color might be fastened with brass-headed nails above each flower in the pattern.

This style of lambrequin would suit nearly every room, and would be very easily worked, either in outline or in filled-in embroidery. Its effect would be extremely



Fig. 51.



Fig. 52.

good if the color of the velvet were dead gold, and the pattern worked in bright yellow and green silks.

When the chimney-piece is long, the center depression is an improvement; otherwise, it may be omitted, and the velvet cut straight along. A heavy fringe is a favorite addition, but a scalloped button-hole edge is quite as pretty, and in many instances more suitable, or a plain band of deeper color than the ground will be found very effective. A less formal design (as in Fig. 52) is intended for a greater variety of colors. The flowers might be pink or white, on dark-brown ground, or, as such colors are delicate, and easily catch the smoke (which is often an unenviable accompaniment of a pleasant fire), darker tints might be selected, always with due regard to the general effect and the lights and shadows.

Both these patterns could be carried round the sides, while for some chimney-pieces, especially those that are built high, it is an improvement to let the drapery hang at the corners; and, again, a very good effect is produced by simply having the lambrequin just the length of the mantel, so that, fastened to the wall at the back, it hangs easily over the front. For this style the wooden shelf can be dispensed with.

It is a good arrangement to carry up a background of the same material as the lambrequin, which may be arranged in folds, or hung from rings upon a brass rod, and thus form an effective background for chimney ornaments. Vases and plaques show up well upon a mantel-shelf so arranged.

A more elaborate pattern than any yet suggested may be found in Fig. 53, which could be variously treated; it might either be worked upon serge in crewels, or done in *appliqué* work, the shades of the foliage being conveyed

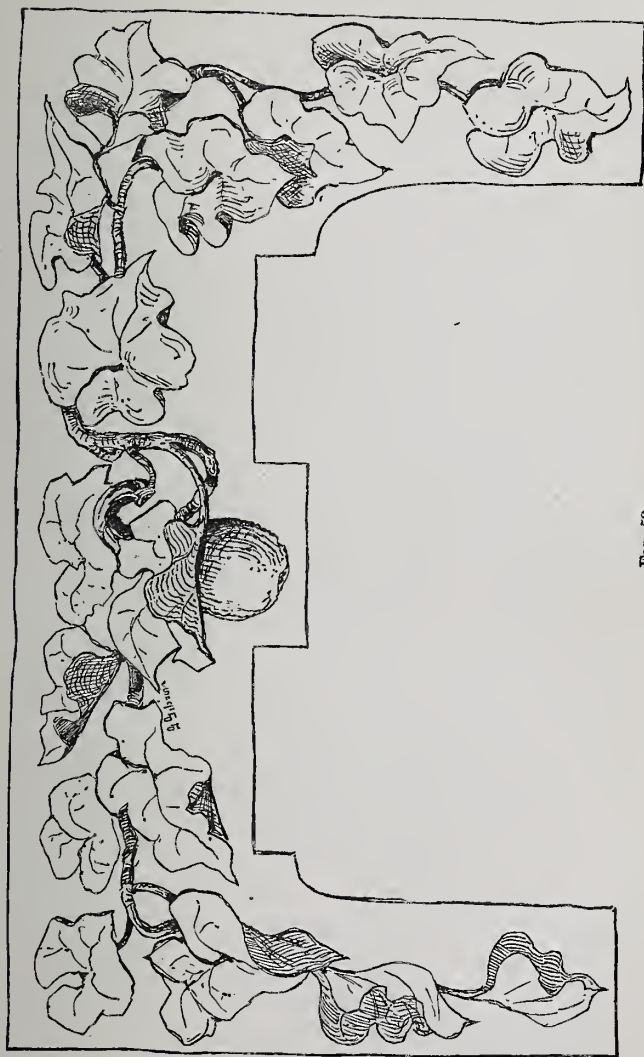


Fig. 53.

in different stuffs or cloth ; or, it would be very beautiful in raised work, in colored silks with gradations of tone ; the branch might be given in dull brown, the leaves in shaded greens, and the fruit worked in warm gold, the tints varying as suggested by the lights and shadows of the engraving. Stamped velveteen would make an admirable ground for this design ; so, too, would heavy brown plush.

Mantel-lambrequins arranged in panels are very effective, either by squares worked in divisions in silk, braid or crewel, with designs upon each square, or by the use of lighter material for the panels, which can be laid over a darker ground. If the panel patterns are different, they should yet be of the same character in design, and should harmonize well. A design in imitation of tiles worked in squares of red, blue, and white would be novel. Summer lambrequins can readily be made of linen worked in crewels, or of the same material merely trimmed with lace or fringe ; and for such, the simple plan of hanging them over the shelf without elaborate fixing is the better, as they can then be easily removed for washing.

A pattern composed of alternate flowers in natural colors worked upon a light ground, as, for instance, a rose and lily, or a pansy and narcissus, would be a pleasant summer design. Sometimes the decoration of the chimney-piece only commences with the lambrequin, and is carried on by the assistance of a cabinet-maker. Shelves rise above the mantel, which in their turn receive decorative hangings, and upon them knickknacks of all kinds find a place.

The skillful needle-woman whose handiwork has converted the harsh, unbroken ugliness of the mantel into a picturesque or artistic combination, will seek other fields,

and the mantel-lambrequin will be the precursor of many similar attempts. Smaller ones for corner brackets, and tasty valances for shelves, will find a place.

The material and design of these must depend very largely upon the places they are called upon to occupy; a stiff, conventional pattern being better for a curtain destined for a shelf, and a more fanciful design for a corner bracket. Such lambrequins look well in cloth, worked in silks, and edged round the bottom in small scallops. They should never be long enough or heavy enough to weigh down the brackets they adorn. A very pretty little hanging, intended for a corner shelf to hold rare china cups, has been made of olive-green momie-cloth with a design of a flowering tea-plant, in white flowers with golden centers, and it was at once pretty and suggestive.

Panels.—Panel decoration, as we have seen, must in every case be subordinate; at the same time, it ought not to be meaningless, and, while any very decided intention would be out of place, suggestive designs are advisable.

So, in Fig. 54, which provides a series of panel designs, the idea conveyed by the four drawings is that of the seasons. Natural wood, susceptible of high polish, will be the best for the purpose, and natural colors, as far as possible, should be selected for the painting. Such panels would look well arranged at intervals near the mantel, or might be placed in pairs—one on either side—autumn with the falling leaves, and winter on the one hand, spring and the summer cherries on the other.

Six little designs for smaller panels to set upon brackets or mantel, or, in fact, anywhere, are given in Fig. 55, and afford sufficient variety. Sea-ferns, intended to be



FIG 54.

painted in sea-green of rather a dead tone, inclose a small sea-view, while coral, in its delicate twists, might be of

light pink, deepening as the branches meet to support the little sketch of a sailing vessel. In another, a landscape



FIG. 55.

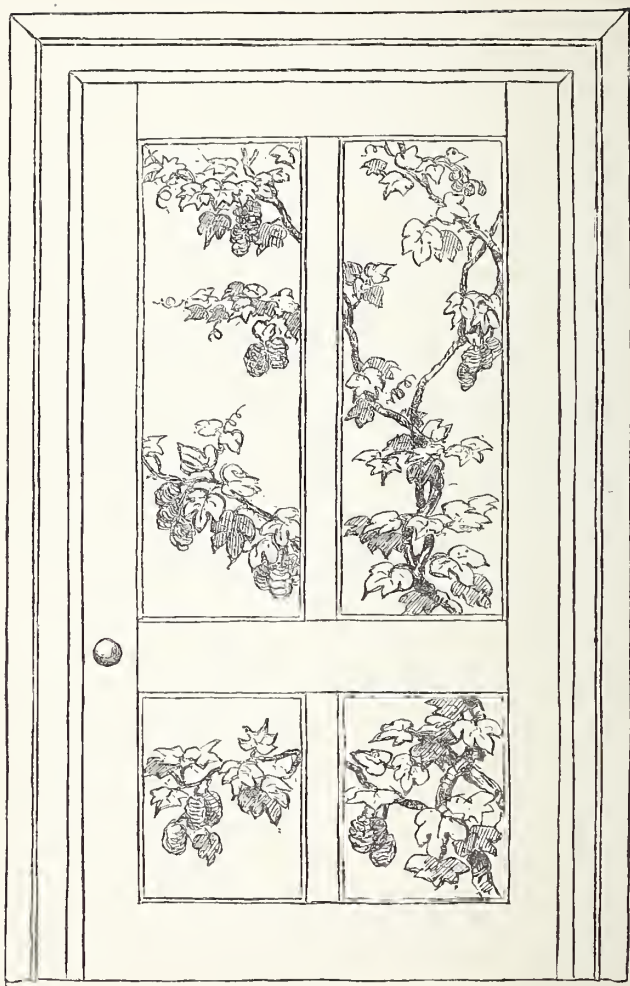


FIG. 56.

gives a view of a cottage on the cliff, while beneath, sweet clover, eager birds, and a shelf with *bric-à-brac*,

are all alike suggestive and appropriate for the purpose for which they are intended.

It would be difficult to find anything more generally suitable for the panels of a door than the designs given in Fig. 56. These represent trailing hops, one of the very prettiest effects in nature, and one which by its freedom and lightness is suitable for almost any position. It is strange that this pattern is so seldom found in decoration, for all who have seen growing hops must admit that there is no plant which exceeds it in beauty and decorative effect. The tender, delicate green of the blossom, with a darker shade of the same color for the abundant foliage, and still lighter touches for the tendrils, could not fail to please, while the effect would be heightened, supposing the background to be of light wood, by the browns of the branch-like stems.

Panels for cabinets are often ordered of successful artists, while many elegant reception-rooms are decorated after designs elaborated by successful painters. Indeed, panel-painting, if it is to exceed the modest limits already suggested, can only be successfully attempted by a master of the craft, and we would dissuade amateurs from all but the most simple attempts at such decoration.

INCIDENTAL DECORATIONS.

UNDER this heading we will consider the many opportunities for decoration by the needle and brush in the less important objects of the home. Their name is legion, and many a modest room has been made beautiful by the industry and good taste of the lady inhabiting it.

Chair-Backs and Cushions.—The seats and backs of chairs are often enriched by a skillful use of embroidery. A broad strip, three inches in width, let into the material that forms the covering, is effective, and, if a free running pattern is selected for the back, it may be repeated upon the seat. The design given in Fig. 57 offers the advantage of novelty ; it represents a conventionalized sea-fern, and would be effective either worked in silks upon velvet or in crewels upon stuff—probably appearing better in the richer material. The sea-fern in combination with sea-weed in the companion design, Fig. 58, would be even prettier, because it would admit of greater blending of colors ; deeper greens for the blades of sea-grass, and greenish browns for the weed, would look well upon a ground of rich, deep crimson ; but, necessarily, much must depend upon the dominant color of the furniture.

The effect of a handsome chair-back is thoroughly spoiled if it is out of harmony with the remainder of the furniture in a room, or at variance with the carpet and

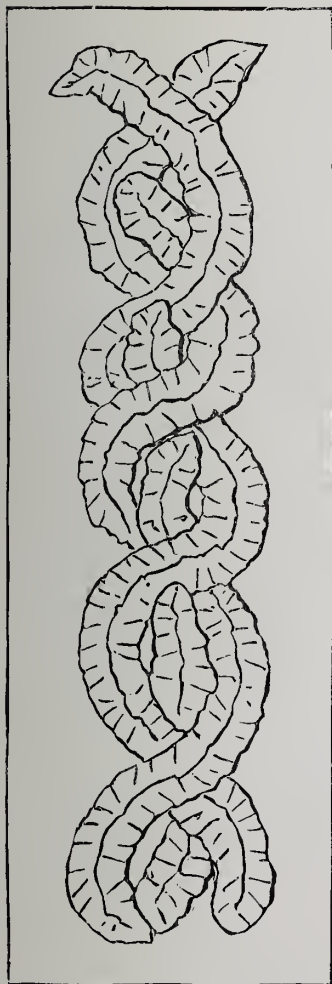


FIG. 57.



FIG. 58.

hangings. An attempt has been made to introduce velvet chair-coverings, worked in raised stars in heavy

bullion ; but, besides being very costly in the production, such efforts are ill repaid by the effect, as the bullion tarnishes so very soon, and needs constant attention.

The covers of large chairs look better with a more general pattern, covering the entire material, but these are seldom undertaken at home ; good effects have been obtained by the selection of handsome French cretonnes, the patterns of which are worked over in raised silks. But such designs, however effective, are very tedious, the ground being so fully covered by the pattern.

Loose covers for chairs are pretty when made of cool gray linens, with bias of decided color used as piping ; strips laid on down the back and across the seat, of some darker material worked in silk or crewels of the same tone as the bias, are very effective. Plush covers, with central designs for seat and back, look handsome, and a border with conventional pattern goes well with them.

Rocking-chairs can be made ornamental as well as beguiling by the variety of decoration that can be bestowed upon them—coverings of every kind of material being made to slip on over the back : velveteen, with a broad running pattern worked on linen laid on down the center ; linen, with strips of darker material ; momie-cloth, simply embroidered in a running pattern in twisted silks ; in short, anything that industry can effect and taste suggest is attempted.

Cushions for deep Cane Chairs, again, can be made of almost any material, and of almost any design. Peacock-blue, dead gold, or maroon velvet, harmonize well with the chairs that are finished off, as so many are, with black and gold.

A long, round cushion to support the head, fitting into the neck, is a very essential addition to the luxury of a

rocking-chair. It may be made of any soft material, shaped like a small bolster and stuffed with wool; then a cord is attached to either end, by means of which it hangs over the back of the chair, to be adjusted according to the needs of the sitter. Such neck-cushions once used are rarely dispensed with.

Sofa-Cushions admit of endless variety. Soft plushes, with *appliqué* designs, look very handsome; so do silk and satin covers, worked in crewels or in raised silk embroidery. If a design to be appliquéd on plush is selected, the pattern to be laid in should be darker than the ground, and should be outlined in silks of gay colors or gold thread. Edgings of handsome cord are necessary to finish such a cushion, and tassels to match the darker shades would make a handsome addition. Squares of cretonne to be worked in raised silks are very often obtained for cushion-covers, or cloth of deep, plain color can be very elaborately worked in a rich design covering the ground almost entirely. Flowers, foliage, or fruit are the most suitable patterns for such a purpose.

Table-Covers.—The material and design for table-covers must vary with the room and table for which they are destined. For a dining-room table, nothing is handsomer than deep crimson cloth, with a heavy bordering of dead gold, finished by a conventional design in the corners, if desired; and for a library the same style of table-cover would be suitable, but it might be of deep maroon or dark blue, with a bordering somewhat less heavy of darker material worked in gold-colored silk. Instead of a border, a thick, deep fringe is sometimes preferred; it gives a look of importance and substantiality to the cloth, and the fringe might be headed by a narrow line of deep-toned color.

The fashion of kettle-drums, or afternoon teas, so largely indulged in now, has given rise to the introduction of dainty little tables, just of the right size to hold the necessary complement of cups and saucers. For the further honor of the occasion, pretty cloths in endless characteristic devices are brought into the service. Usually of the finest linen, plenty of scope is afforded in them for the use of decorative needle-work. Fig. 59 provides a very quaint and pretty design for such a purpose. Worked in fine blue crewels or in silks, such a pattern would be very suitable. The design, if the table were large enough, might be worked sufficiently far from the edge to allow of a deep fringe of drawn work. Less elaborate designs could be used, either running right round the edge as a border, for which purpose simple flower-sprays or vine-patterns are prettiest, or as designs for each corner and the center.

A fanciful Japanese pattern is not inappropriate; or a Chinese mandarin in one corner, matched by a branch of the tea-plant in another, while quaint little cups and saucers figure in the corresponding ones, would not look amiss. Monograms or coats-of-arms are often elaborately worked in the center. *Filoselle* upon fine linen washes well, and has a richer effect than crewels or ordinary silks.

A nice cover for a little odd-and-end table, upon which old china or *bric-à-brac* are displayed, can be made of stamped velvet, edged with dark lace, and should be made to fit the table.

Elaborate silk and velvet cloths are out of place if a table is intended for meals, even if only for tea; for such a purpose linen alone is appropriate. Expensive materials, easily spoiled by a spot of butter or the spilling of a cup of tea, are only a source of anxiety, and therefore

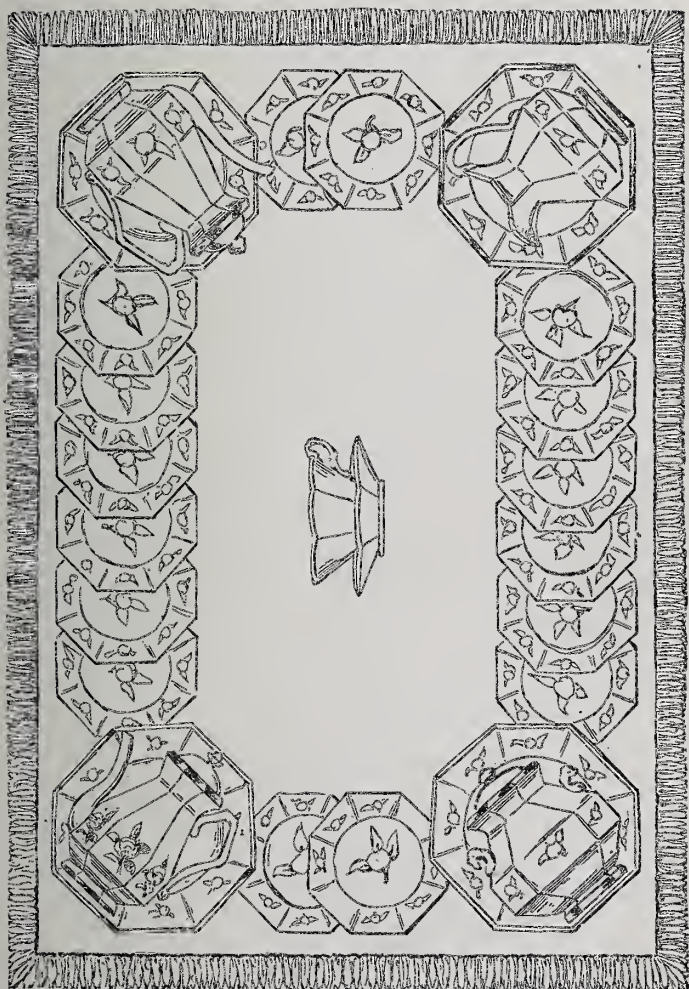


FIG. 59.

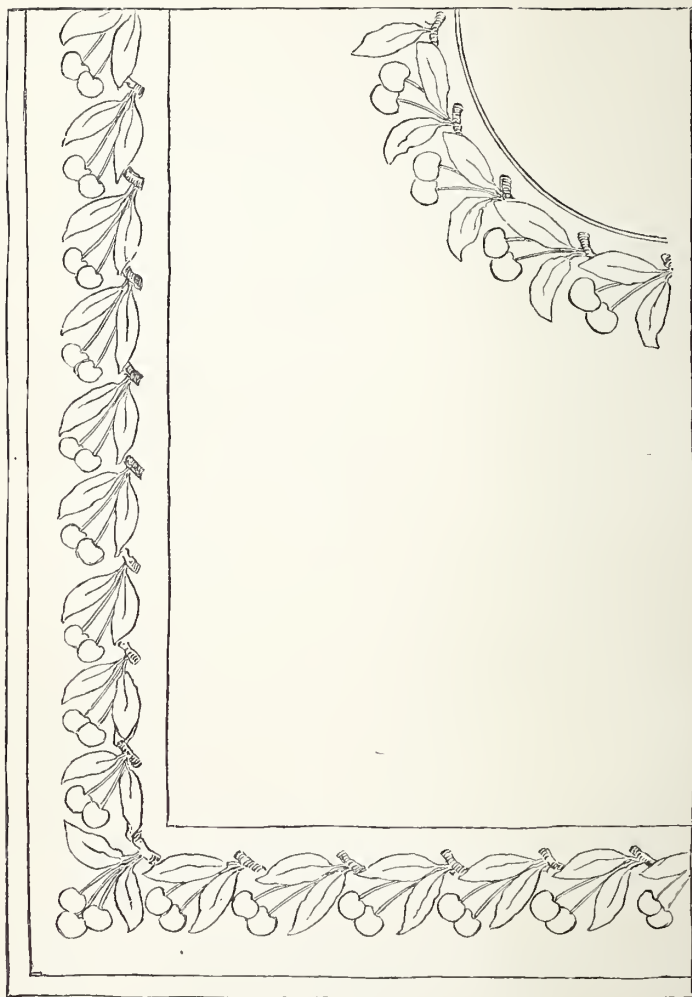


FIG. 60.

not beautiful in such a connection, however handsome they may be in themselves.

Slips, to be placed upon a handsome cloth, can be made pretty by the use of embroidery and drawn work. If made of fine linen, a border of blue or crimson might be laid on at each end and wrought in gold or crimson silk, the edges being then simply fringed out, or elaborated in drawn work.

Fig. 60 represents a design for the border of a tablecloth for dining-room or library. This could be very effectively worked in deep green and crimson silks upon a ground of dark brown or purple. It might be treated in *appliqué* work, but would be a little difficult; the little branch-stumps in deep brown would relieve the green and crimson if worked on a purple ground. Again, it would be very handsome in velvet, with a plush bordering laid on and worked in raised embroidery.

Doilies, or little round mats to place under finger-glasses, are often made very pretty indeed. Elaborate designs are out of place for these, and it is foolish to take handsome satin or silk for such a purpose. *Appliqué* lace is often used, and simple designs appliquéd on to a groundwork of net are appropriate and pretty; but it is more usual now to make them of fine white linen or lawn, and embroider designs in outline-stitch either in *filoselle*, silk, or crewel. Drawn work round the edge is very effective, and handsome results have been obtained by elaborate drawn work inclosing a center, square or round, upon which a design is worked or sometimes etched in pen and ink. Quaint figures, of the Kate Greenaway order, are very suitable for the purpose; scenes from popular operas, or little views of well-known places, all find admirers. A not inappropri-

ate plan is to select groups of flowers or fruit, or pretty sprays of vine or creepers, to correspond with the pattern usually found upon dessert-plates. The two comic designs



FIG. 61.

given in Fig. 61 might be done in outline work in blue silk upon white linen. Sometimes cut work is appliquéd on to silk or satin of deep crimson or blue; but such

dainty doilies are very apt to receive wine and fruit stains, which are difficult to remove; for this reason, simple white linen is best for the purpose. Doilies are best made round, in shape to fit the plates for which they are intended, but sometimes they are made square and folded across. For etching purposes, the surface of the linen should first be prepared by the application of gum, dried, and ironed upon the wrong side. Before beginning to etch, the material should be tightly stretched upon a flat board.

Window-Shades.—Crimson window-shades are no longer so popular as they were, and as there is a general feeling that plain holland ones are not sufficiently decorative, it is becoming very usual to attempt to make them less formal by embroidery. Sometimes gray linen is chosen for such a purpose, and a design which covers the entire ground worked in outline-stitch in crewels; but the objection to this is, that the light coming through varies so much upon sunshiny or cloudy days that no confidence can be placed in the effect it may have at different times.

For this reason, we would advise limiting the decoration of shades to a bordering, which can be prettily worked and laid on. Such a bordering might be placed not only upon the ends, but up the sides, in narrow strips, and the design given in Fig. 62, of morning-glories, would be both effective and appropriate. It might be worked on a strip of dark linen, in many colors, as far as possible in the blues, pinks, and crimsons of the natural flowers, while the leaves should be of pleasant green. The running border below might be of narrow blue silk braid stitched on. A conventional pattern for a border is always appropriate, and beneath it a cotton fringe or a broad gimp gives a nice finish to the shade. Buff linen



FIG. 62.

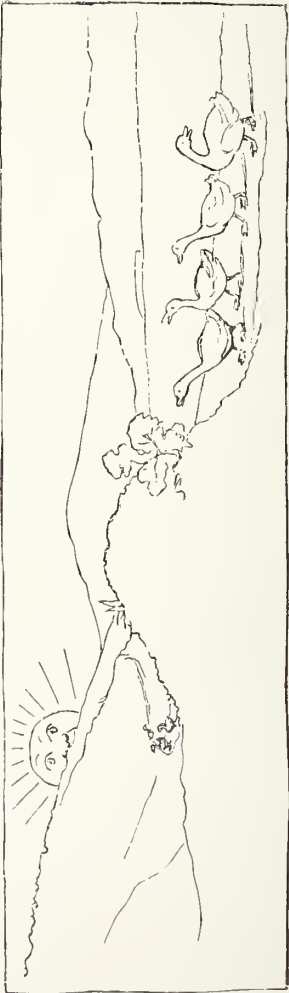


FIG. 63.



FIG. 64.

shades offer advantage where the sun is very powerful, as they throw a softened light into the room. Borders intended for shades of that character require less variety of colors in the design. Browns, crimsons, or deep olive-greens would harmonize best.

Upon a nursery shade such a design as that in Fig. 63 would be appropriate, and would please the little ones. It should simply be worked in dark brown crewels in outline-stitch.

Piano Panels and Coverings.—As every article of furniture that can be decorated receives its meed of attention, the piano does not form any exception to the rule. It has become very usual to remove the paneling in an upright instrument, and in its stead provide a piece of embroidery, in outline pattern or close silk work. Such a design as that furnished in Fig. 64 strikes us as singularly appropriate. Two little birds in an apple-tree bough are pouring out floods of melody, while a rabbit, entranced, pauses in his delight, and erects his ears to their utmost limit in his desire to catch the strain in its entirety. This design, worked upon crimson or deep-blue satin in outline-work, the blossoms only in raised French knot, would be simply charming.

Square hangings to hide the unsightly back of a piano when it is wheeled out into the middle of the room are very commonly provided. Sometimes these are simply of muslin drawn over colored calico, with a heading run upon a brass rod, and fitting the width of the instrument; but they can, of course, be much more elaborate. A hanging of some neutral color is, perhaps, the best, with a conventionalized bordering on darker material, the colors on no account to be too bright. Or the back can be simply covered with a plain square of sateen, or the coarse un-

dressed silk now sold at the stores, with a trimming of Macramé lace sewed on at the top and bottom.

A covering for the top of a cottage-piano is usually only a broad strip of material with a design worked as a border. Holbein-work would look very well in such a position. A handsome design, finished off with plaited fringe to hang over the ends, would be appropriate. Heavier materials are often used, but are not so desirable; neither are the heavy ball and chenille fringes which are sometimes seen.

For a grand piano, complete covers are made, and there is plenty of scope for as much decoration as is desired. Such coverings can be of any material, from cool gray linen, made to slip on and off easily, and simply decorated with colored pipings, to the elaborate covering of satin or silk worked in rich embroidery, which is as easily soiled or stained as the instrument it hides could be scratched. A serviceable cover could be made of dark maroon or dark purple cloth, just large enough to go on easily, with a pattern worked upon a bordering in gold silks or yellow crewels, and finished off with a narrow worsted fringe if desired.

Tidies.—For the infinite varieties of these apparently indispensable articles in modern homes, it is quite impossible to give any definite directions. But a practical suggestion may be offered to the effect that such accessories, if they must be allowed, should be *fastened* on to the chair or sofa for which they are intended. Nothing irritates an unfortunate man more than the inevitable disposition that tidies have to stick to his broadcloth! and nothing gives a more untidy look to a room than these same “tidies” when out of place. Who does not know how instinctively a lady sets them straight, and how annoyed

she feels every time she does it! But, at any rate, as tidies seem to be considered indispensable, let them be fixtures, just tacked into the place they are intended for with a few stitches, or, failing that, pinned securely.

Baskets, again, are a prolific source of decorative effort. Made now in very loosely plaited straw-work, they are susceptible of almost any amount of ornament. Sometimes they are simply loosely lined with silk or satin, which is pulled through the interstices, and gives an appearance of honey-comb pattern, which is pretty; or they are embroidered in crewels, generally in raised work, which is effective, and well thrown up by the color of the straw. Pretty effects are produced simply by bands of bright ribbon sewn on, a bunch of wheat, grass, or even corn-ears, being passed through them and secured with a bow. Baskets are now made for such a variety of purposes, from the substantial structure intended to hold the logs for the winter fire, to the dainty work-basket in which baby's fairy garments are hidden away, that it is impossible to offer suggestions that can in any way cover the ground. Suffice it to say that, for most of the purposes that are included in so wide a range, bright, cheery colors are appropriate, and there is not so much reason, as in many other branches of decoration, to say, Be careful in your selection of variety. Such legitimate objects for ornament may well be left entirely to individual taste and fancy.

Inexpensive Ornaments.—Under this heading we offer a few practical suggestions to those whose means are more limited than their ambition. It is quite wonderful to consider how much can be done in really effective decoration with the very simplest materials. Tapes, narrow ribbons, buttons, leather, even brass curtain-rings, can all be

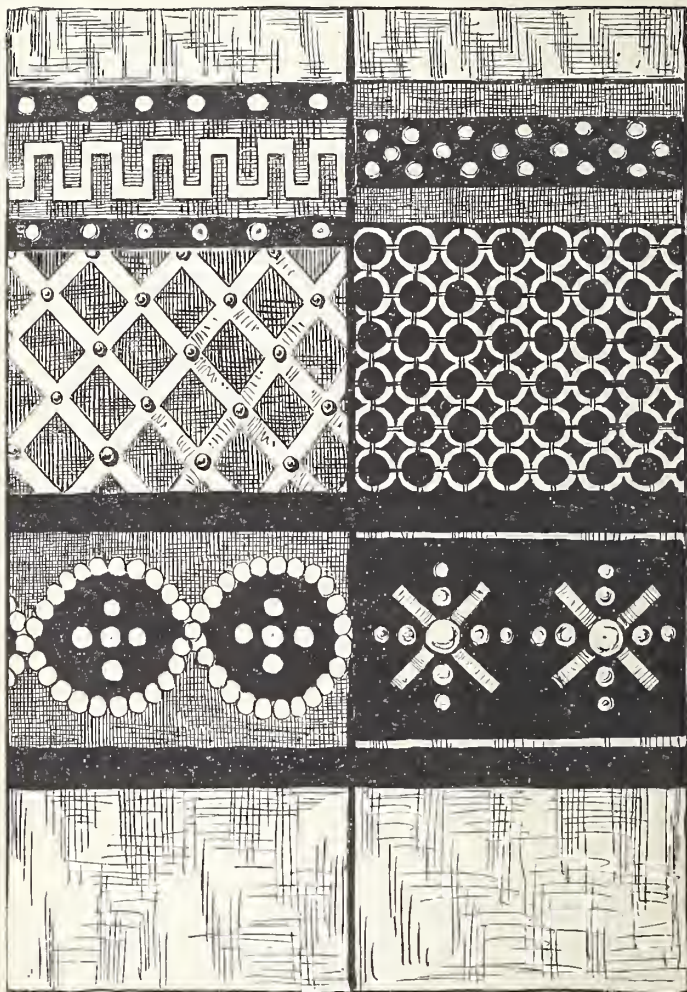


FIG. 65.

surprisingly useful. Fig. 65 gives several designs for such attempts. In one of them, buttons, ordinary pearl buttons,

are used to produce quite an effective pattern. Such circles, with the inclosed cross, could be laid upon any deep-toned material, and would look extremely well as bordering for a *portière*. Suppose such a hanging were of blue momie-cloth, a deep crimson border with the white buttons would look very handsome; or the case might be reversed, and crimson chosen as the body of the curtain, blue for the border.

Side by side with this design is one for a combination of leather and buttons, a larger button forming the center of the leather star. Such strips of leather are easily obtained, either in ordinary yellow, or in better materials, as kid or morocco. So, too, the diamond design, of leather, and round "knobby" buttons, would look very well over any dark material, and might be appropriately finished off by the Grecian pattern in leather with its outer bordering of buttons.

Apart from these, the suggestion in the same design for a use of ordinary brass curtain-rings is new and effective. The silk for fastening them together should accord with the use for which the decoration is destined. Supposing the ring pattern is to be placed over dark blue velvet or cloth, or deep maroon velvet or plush, the fastenings might be of crimson silk, worked in chain-stitch and so easily secured. Such a linking could, if necessary, secure each ring to the background, or they could be secured at intervals, sufficiently close to prevent their bulging out from the background. The narrow bordering which completes the design could be omitted or used, as thought best. Lighter material inserted above the dark ground used for the buttons would introduce a variety.

It will be readily seen that such suggestions open up a field for almost infinite variety.

WOOD-CARVING.

WOOD-CARVING presents so many pleasant possibilities for ladies, that a work on home decoration would be incomplete without some reference to it. It is a mistake to suppose that this art is difficult; its rudiments are very easily acquired from such directions as we shall give, and, once mastered, it is always possible to obtain designs, either by copying from nature or by reproducing some of the endless variety that are to be met with on every hand.

It is scarcely more difficult to indent or carve a panel in low relief than it is to transfer a pattern to the surface of the wood, and after a little practice in panels it will be found quite easy to carve "in the round," that is, to make complete figures.

Sets of light tools can be purchased, but ladies should avoid buying those known as "carving tools," as they are usually too heavy for small and weak hands, and amateurs require simple implements. Those known as "print-cutters' tools," which are small copies of the wood-carver's implements, are the best, and small handles are sold to which these instruments are easily fitted.

The tools required include chisels of three sizes; one of them an eighth of an inch in width, the others respectively a quarter and a half inch wide. After buying these tools, it is requisite to get them sharpened, and for

carving in wood the chisels should be ground rather slantingly, in order that the cutting edge may be at an angle with the sides instead of square with them ; by this means a sharper edge is obtained, invaluable in cutting the fine edges of an elaborate design.

An oil-stone must also be purchased to set the edges, for although this is done in the first instance where the tools are bought, each worker must learn to do it as occasion requires. The stone is fixed in a block, and the whole process consists in pouring a few drops of oil upon the stone, and passing the tool rapidly to and fro, grasping it in the right hand, and pressing the fore and middle fingers upon the instrument, while the thumb supports it beneath. It is only necessary to move the tool regularly and keep it at the same slant all the time.

After using, the stone must be carefully wiped, or it will become incrustated with the steel raspings from the tools.

Next after the chisels come the gouges, which are merely chisels of another kind, the surfaces being bent in a position parallel with the length, so that a curved groove is obtained upon using them instead of a flat cut. Gouges can be bought of various sizes, and stones for grinding them are sold with them.

Many other tools are often spoken of in connection with carving, but in reality a lady possessed of a few chisels and gouges of different sizes has sufficient stock for all the preliminaries of the art, and as she progresses will learn the necessary additions to be made.

For the purpose of carrying on wood-carving, a strong deal table should be procured, the stronger and heavier the better, as nails must be driven in and holes bored in it. The table should stand in a good light.

The first attempt at such work must necessarily be a very simple one. An ivy-leaf is the easiest representation that can be attempted. For the purpose, a piece of smooth pine-wood should be chosen, as free from knots as possible, and about three quarters of an inch in thickness. Perfectly dry, well-seasoned wood is necessary, and old boards, such as are to be found stored away in most houses, would answer admirably for a beginning. A sketch of the leaf to be carved must first be drawn upon paper, the back of which is then rubbed with red chalk; this paper is then pinned on to the wood, and pressed over with some blunt instrument—a bodkin, crochet-needle, or pin-head will do—and upon removing it the outline will be found upon the wood. Deficiencies in the outline must be corrected in pencil, or, if hard wood is used, in pen and ink.

This satisfactorily accomplished, the first process of carving, known as “stabbing-out,” follows. This can be effected in two ways—either by using the chisel and simply stabbing the outline of the leaf, by holding the tool upright and pressing directly downward, or by the use of a little notched instrument called a “pattern-wheel,” which turns on pressure and with its little points dents out the pattern as it is pushed along the outlined edges.

When once the design is thus distinctly outlined into the wood, it is a good plan to deepen the depression made by the chisel by running the curved gouge round the edge, until a groove about the sixteenth of an inch in depth is made.

The next operation, of cutting away the wood between the outlines, requires caution. The chisel should be held in the right hand, the wrist of the left being held firmly on the panel, and the tool guided by the forefinger

of the left hand. As little wood as possible should be removed at first, until the operator thoroughly understands how to cut with or against the grain of the wood. To clear the wood between the outlines, it is best to work across, that is, not in the direction of the fibers. It is better to begin the operation of cutting out the wood about a quarter of an inch from the outline, and to shave very gradually toward it, relieving the wood at each cut, and setting the leaf free; experience will soon teach the best method for securing accuracy in the outline.

All this should be done very carefully and slowly, until the wood is entirely removed between the pattern edges, leaving the pattern in relief; and care must be taken always to *cut* thoroughly, and never to tear away or dig the wood. A great authority upon the subject says: "Leave no rags, jags, or fragments; clear out completely every angle and corner; get your work as smooth as possible with whatever tool you may be using, and let every stroke of your chisel or gouge be regulated by design." This, of course, can only come by practice; but by following these simple rules, by cutting slowly and carefully, a little at a time, by holding the tools firmly and leaving the pattern sloping outward to be finished, the amateur will be surprised at the results obtained after very little practice.

The mid-ribs of the separate lobes of the leaf now call for attention. These must first be stabbed out, as in the case of the outline, and then the surface of the lobe be slanted down to them from side to side.

The second stage is merely a repetition of the first process, the ground being uniformly lowered, and then the appearance of the leaf claims consideration. Certain portions of the surface must be lowered to present an ap-

pearance of reality, parts remaining at their original elevation, others being cut or shaved away to present an undulating surface. Here a knowledge of art is useful in suggesting the right distribution of light and shade, which must be conveyed by the ingenious use of the gouges of different degrees of curvature. Some beginners, distressed at the unequal appearance of the carved surface, have recourse to artificial means for smoothing and leveling, and employ glass-paper, or sand, or even small sticks glued and dipped in sand, which they use as polishers; but wood-carving ought to depend upon no such artificial aid—it should remain as the tools leave it.

In carving, the study of nature is very important; by this means a knowledge of the different fibers in various leaves is acquired, and wood-carving, from being merely mechanical amusement, becomes in reality an art.

Such simple instructions suffice to prove how much might be accomplished for home decoration by mere beginners in the art of wood-carving; it is not our purpose to offer directions for the more elaborate work which can be studied in schools, and which requires more preparation and the use of more complicated instruments than are easily procurable. The first principles once learned, it is easy for a lady to adapt them to ornamentation, and, from the use of the chisel and gouge, she will very probably have recourse to the fret-saw, for the elaboration of designs for brackets, book-stands, shelves, etc.

The fret-saw is an instrument consisting of a frame made up of two side-pieces and a cross-bar. The blade or saw is kept in its place by two iron pins which pass through the handles, and a cord is wound round the upper ends of the side-pieces. Before using it, a hole

must be cut in the wood which is to be operated upon, into which the end of the saw is introduced, and then, by very gentle pressure upon the handles, it is worked over the outlined design. Various sizes can be obtained, and the fret-saw can be bought in connection with treadles which are worked by the foot; but it must never be forgotten that the saw only works as it is pressed forward, and it can only be drawn back by being lightly lifted. In designing a pattern to be worked by the fret-saw, it must be borne in mind that an equal distribution of form and of space is indispensable, that there may not be too great a space in one part, or too much wood in another. A very good way of testing the design before attempting to cut it out, is to fill in all the parts that are to be removed with Indian ink, leaving the pattern itself white; by this means it is easy to judge of the proportions of space and wood. Another thing to be considered is that the pattern for fret-sawing must always be connected with the border at certain points.

When finished, carving may either be left in the natural condition of the wood, or it may be thought desirable to polish or stain it. Sweet-oil mixed with umber will both polish and darken the surface of oak, and various dyes can be obtained at the stores. For ordinary black stain, the best ink applied three or four times with a brush is excellent. Different woods take different dyes, and this must be a matter of individual taste and experience.

Sometimes, in carving or sawing, a crack or hole occurs; in such a case, it is a good plan to make some dust with a coarse file from the wood and convert it into paste with glue, filling the cavity with it. Directions are always given with the different machines for fret-

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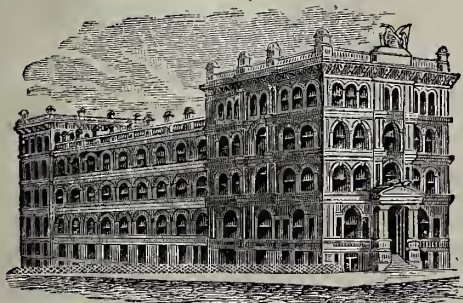
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